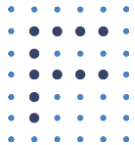
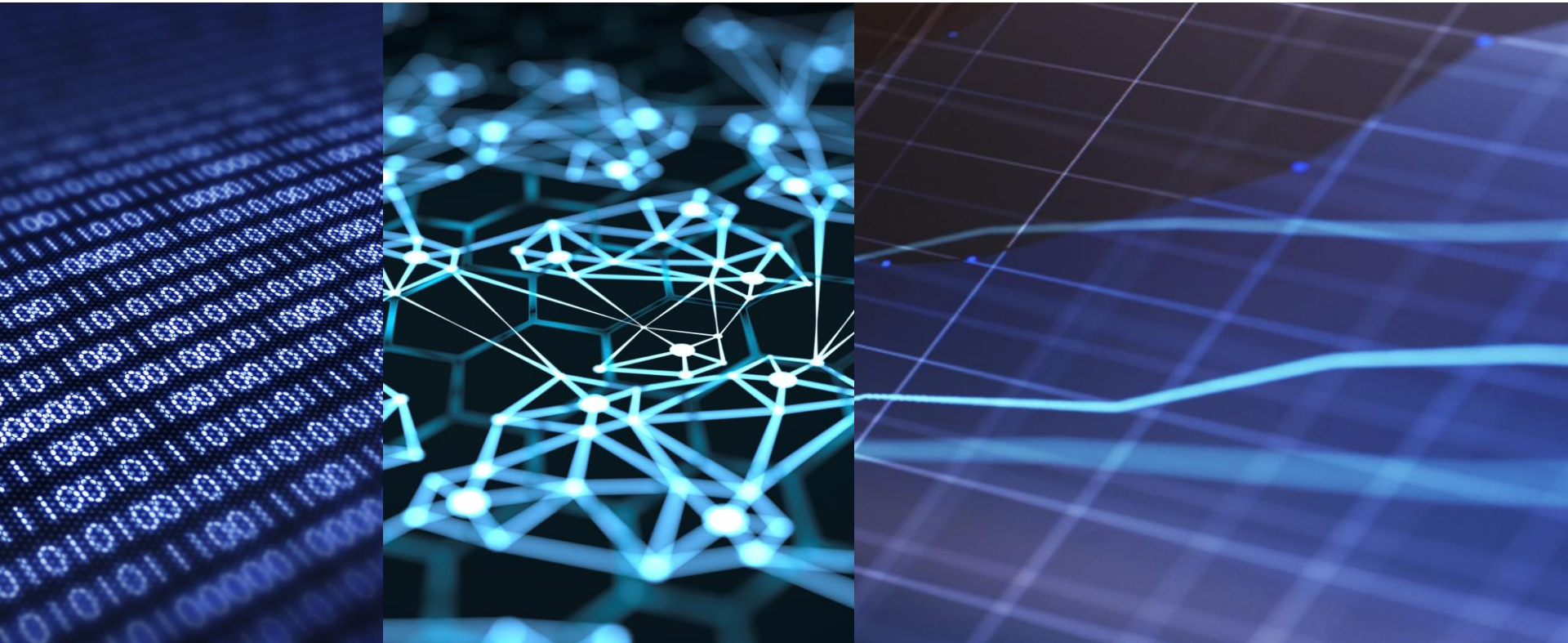


Framework LLC Communication on Progress

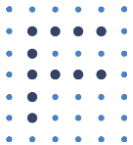
United Nations Global Compact



August 1, 2016

Strategies for Sustainable Advantage

Framework LLC is a specialty analytics and advisory firm. We help leading companies create and protect value through strategies for sustainably managing their financial, social, and environmental capital.



Contents

CEO message	4
Who we are and what we do	5
Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC	6
Our roles as strategic counsel to the UNGC Network USA	11
Identifying our material issues	13
Delivering on our priorities	16
About this report and contact information	23

Dear stakeholders,

We are pleased to present this, our first Global Compact Communication on Progress (COP).

In early 2015, Framework crossed an important threshold by reaching the required size to become eligible to sign the Global Compact. And on August 1, 2015, we did.

We are not new to the Global Compact. We have long supported the Ten Principles through our work with clients that are Global Compact signatories and through our work as strategic counsel to the Global Compact Network USA since 2012. All along, we have supported the Ten Principles through our work, our operations, and our thought leadership. Today, through this COP, we reaffirm that support.

Framework is a different kind of consultancy. We are strong believers in capitalism as a positive force in society. We reject the notion that value creation is a zero-sum game, wherein value for a broad cross-section of stakeholders must come at the expense of a firm's investors or owners. And we've spent the past 13 years demonstrating this through our client work, research, and own management.

Our work with clients is guided always by these beliefs, our mission, and a long-term perspective. Our work has helped clients focus attention on those issues that matter most to their stakeholders. Many of the issues that we have helped clients address, whether they are signatories or not, relate directly to the Global Compact's Ten Principles.

Upon signing the Global Compact, we conducted a materiality analysis for our own business—a process we'd conducted dozens of times before on behalf of our clients—to better understand the issues to which we must attend over the next

several years. The results did not surprise us. Our top **issues—growth and profitability, promoting sustainability, client satisfaction, effective marketing, and talent management—**are also interconnected and interdependent.

In the coming year we will set goals designed to enable us to make progress on our material issues. For example, we are currently refining our recruiting process to reach a larger, more diverse talent pool. We will also look to align our own business strategy and services with the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Over the past 13 years, we've built a firm that lives its mission to create positive impact in the world. We've created a culture and work ethic that engender enthusiasm in employees and enable us to deliver the ideas, analyses, and results that our clients need. As a result, we enjoy strong, longstanding relationships that enable us to invest in our people, tools, and research and grow the firm.

We are ambitious in our quest to accelerate companies' move toward modern management practices. We have much to offer yet and are passionate about the possibilities our future holds.



A blue ink handwritten signature of Kate Rebernak, consisting of stylized initials and a surname.

Kate Rebernak
Founder and CEO

Who we are and what we do

Framework LLC is a unique firm, and a special place to work.

We are a mission-driven business: a specialty advisory and analytics firm that has been helping leading companies create and protect value through strategies for sustainably managing their financial, social, and environmental capital since 2003.

We are also a small business that thinks much bigger than our size: an entrepreneurial laboratory where we challenge ourselves daily to innovate and model the employee-centered management practices we encourage our clients to implement.

At Framework, we believe organizations that protect the environment, uphold human rights, engage in fair labor practices, develop sustainable products, and behave ethically reap significant financial and intangible benefits. In fact, our analyses have demonstrated that companies are most likely to outperform financially when such practices are embedded into operations and undertaken in the normal course of business.

Quick Facts about Framework

- Founded 2003; Offices in Stamford, Connecticut and Seattle, Washington
- Clients represented in the Fortune 500, S&P 500, Dow Jones Sustainability Index, and FTSE4Good
- Recognized as pioneers and leaders in materiality analysis
- Research cited by Harvard Business School faculty, *Bloomberg News*, and American Institute of CPAs
- GRI Organizational Stakeholder since 2005
- Experts in GRI G4 reporting and other disclosure frameworks
- Innovators in analysis and application of Bloomberg ESG data as well as financial value correlation analysis
- Strategic Counsel to Global Compact Network USA
- Woman-owned business certified by WBENC
- Certified as a “Great Workplace” by Great Place to Work®
- Winner of 2014 National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award

For more information, visit www.framework-llc.com.

Corporate sustainability is embodied in our concept of Modern Management,

an approach to business that creates long-term value for a broad range of stakeholders by

- responding to the changing environmental, social, governance (ESG), and economic contexts in which a company operates;
- efficiently and responsibly deploying and protecting capital in its social, environmental, and financial forms; and
- uncovering and proactively managing a company’s key risks and opportunities—what we refer to as material issues.

Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC

Human Rights

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
2. make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Commitment, Policy, and Systems

Framework respects and supports the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nation's Protect, Respect, and Remedy Framework](#).

We affirm the dignity, worth, and equality of every person. In Framework's employee handbook, we explicitly state that we treat every person with respect, and in return, expect a high level of personal integrity.

Actions and Outcomes

As a professional services firm, we do not have material human rights issues in our operations. Our clients, however, especially those with complex, global value chains, face various human rights challenges and risks.

Accordingly, we provide advisory services to help our clients assess risks and opportunities across a broad spectrum of human rights issues such as human trafficking, freedom of speech and movement, due process, and others. Over time we expect to build our capacity to review our own suppliers to ensure we are not unknowingly complicit in any abuses conducted by others.

Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC

Labor Standards

3. Business should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. the elimination of all forms of compulsory labor;
5. the effective abolition of child labor;
6. and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Commitment, Policy, and Systems

Framework upholds the Global Compact principles related to freedom of association, elimination of compulsory and child labor, and nondiscrimination. We have explicitly committed to nondiscrimination in our hiring practices, and our employee manual contains provisions related to equal opportunity employment and spells out actions both employees and management can take when concerns or disputes arise. A nonretaliation clause reiterates that employees will not be penalized for proper use of the dispute-resolution procedure.

Actions and Outcomes

We engage in robust discussions with our clients about labor standards in the workplace and supply chain. Over the past year, key conversations and analytical work have centered on diversity and inclusion across management and employee ranks, encompassing topics of unconscious bias, parental leave and return, women in management, and wage inequality.

We have held some of those same discussion with regard to our own operations and are seeking ways to improve the diversity of our firm membership. We are redesigning our recruiting process with a view toward expanding our talent pool and reaching people who can bring a more diverse set of perspectives to our work—whether ethnic, cultural, philosophical/religious, generational, or with regard to sexual identity or orientation.

In 2016, we formed a partnership with Data Laboratories and have introduced the company's Talent Lab software—a data-visualization platform—to clients and contacts. The software provides tools for examining human resources information and quickly identifying performance gaps, risks, and opportunities with regard to employee hiring, retention, diversity, compensation, and other factors. Through a series of powerful data visualization modules, Talent Lab allows HR professionals to dig deep into their workforce data and identify actionable trends, patterns, risks, and opportunities that might otherwise remain hidden.

“We are pleased to be the first U.S. consulting partner for Data Laboratories' Talent Lab software. We believe the platform offers businesses a powerful means of assessing and optimizing their workforces through data-rich analytics that support objective and equitable decision-making at any scale within the organization. Our partnership with Data Labs meaningfully extends our firm's capabilities as a management consultancy helping clients advance performance sustainably. More importantly, it equips our clients with one of the more innovative human capital management tools on the market.”

—Alec Lager, Framework Director of Strategic Services



Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC

Environment

7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Commitment, Policy, and Systems

As an office-based professional services firm, Framework's environmental footprint is relatively small; our greatest contribution to the reduction of environmental impacts comes through our advisory services and thought leadership. Nonetheless, we have undertaken to reduce the environmental footprint of our own operations.

We established our headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, to facilitate a variety of employee lifestyle choices (urban, suburban, rural), all connected by major transit corridors and access to public transportation. Most of our employees do not drive to work but rather take trains or buses or walk. In addition, many employees are offered the opportunity to work from home one or two days per week.

The primary equipment we use includes desks, chairs, computers, printers, tablets, and smartphones. When purchasing new inventory, we consider the environmental impacts of potential purchases. We have also engaged with our building's management company to promote the use of materials such as low-VOC carpeting and paint.

On a day-to-day basis, we recycle materials as possible, print as little as we can, and, because much of our work can be completed from our offices, fly only when the benefits of face-to-face meetings with clients, partners, or colleagues outweigh the environmental and financial cost of doing so.

Actions and Outcomes

Beyond our own footprint, we have a significant impact in facilitating the enhanced environmental performance of our clients. We are involved on multiple fronts related to their efforts to improve environmental performance, including, among others:

- Initial identification of material environmental issues as well as stakeholder expectations around environmental performance
- Analysis of environmental megatrends and their impacts on companies' risk and opportunity profiles
- Collection of environmental data, including for purposes of developing greenhouse gas inventories
- Development of environmental goals and targets, including linkages to the Global Compact Principles and the Global Goals
- Disclosure of environmental impacts and performance in sustainability reports and communications
- Submission of environmental data through mechanisms such as the CDP and Dow Jones Sustainability Index questionnaires to help identify gaps in environmental performance and transparency

Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC

Environment

7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Case study: Promoting the diffusion of environmentally friendly technology

One of our long-standing clients is Covanta, a company that works with businesses and communities to find more sustainable waste management alternatives. With a global network of Energy-from-Waste (EfW) and material processing facilities, Covanta protects the environment, preserves valuable natural resources, and generates clean energy. Among significant environmental benefits, EfW facilities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, conserve land, and support community recycling efforts.

Framework worked with Covanta in 2015 to deliver a new [materiality analysis](#) and [sustainability report](#), developed in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. Covanta sought to promote the use of the report by its government affairs representatives and sales team in discussing new opportunities to expand Covanta's operations. The report was therefore optimized for tablet format, and was written to include robust information on the company's track record of environmental, health and safety, and community engagement efforts.

The report's high degree of transparency is reflected in Covanta's publishing extensive documentation of its [GHG reduction and climate mitigation](#) efforts, company-wide [occupational health and safety statistics](#), and outcomes of its [community partnership programs](#).



“Framework has been a trusted partner to Covanta for almost six years. We have relied on their expert guidance to identify Covanta’s material issues and facilitate constructive dialogue with stakeholders to allow them to weigh in on the topics that matter most to our company’s long-term success.”—**Michael Van Brunt, Director, Sustainability for Covanta**

Promoting the ten principles of the UNGC

Anti-Corruption

10. Businesses should work against corruption in all of its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Commitment, Policy, and Systems

We attribute much of Framework's success and reputation to our commitment to fair dealing and ethical conduct. Our internal policies make clear that unethical practices will not be tolerated and will result in prompt disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. We specifically prohibit, for example:

- Paying or accepting bribes, kickbacks and other illegal payments in any form from anyone for any purpose
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest
- Falsifying or altering any company records or reports
- Disclosing confidential information
- Violating any provision of the [Foreign Corrupt Practices Act](#)

Actions and Outcomes

Employees receive a copy of the Framework employee handbook upon hire and are required to certify that they have read and understood provisions outlined therein. Employees must report any actual or suspected illegal or unethical behavior to their supervisor or a firm partner.

In addition to explicit prohibitions of unethical behavior, our culture strongly reinforces ethical practices. We never take for granted the trust that our clients place in us and have put in place systems, processes, and a culture of discretion to protect the confidentiality of client information.

In our advisory work, we encourage clients to report publicly on the key provisions of their ethics, compliance, and anticorruption policies and systems, and to disclose both the reported and substantiated instances of ethics violations they have recorded as well as corrective actions taken.

Our role as strategic counsel to UNGC Network USA

Global Company Network USA

The Network USA is the local network of UNGC signatories in the United States. Launched in 2007, the Network is a forum designed to bring U.S.-based signatory companies (and U.S.-based units of foreign companies) together with stakeholders from the public sector, civil society, labor, academia, and other spheres in order to advance the values and the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

Since 2012, Framework has contributed to the development and execution of Network USA's strategic plan and programming. We have also refined and strengthened Network communications, from web and social media presence to relationships with Global Compact personnel, prospective signatories, signatories, and other local networks.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Network website:
<http://www.globalcompactusa.org/>.

Framework's mission is to:

- Promote sustainability
- Consciously evolve for the benefit of our clients, our peers and ourselves
- Build strong, lasting relationships and
- Be bold, thoughtful and responsive in all we do

One way in which we live our mission while directly supporting greater awareness of and adoption of United Nations Global Compact principles is through our role as strategic counsel to the Global Compact Network USA.

Global Compact Network USA 2016 Symposium

As we have for the four previous years, Framework planned and produced the [Global Compact Network USA 2016 Symposium](#), held March 31, 2016, in New York City. The symposium attracted more than 150 participants from diverse industries including energy, technology, consumer packaged goods, healthcare, and financial services, as well as those from academic and civil-society organizations. In addition to developing the agenda, booking speakers, and conducting outreach to sponsors, Framework managed all logistics, marketing, and communications for the event.

We collaborated with partners at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Global Reporting Initiative, and the Global Compact to develop the day-long agenda centered on the private sector's role in advancing the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development (known also as the Global Goals or the SDGs), highlighting how business can take the lead in working toward a sustainable world. The event was hosted by Pfizer, with Cigna as a supporting sponsor and CA Technologies as a contributing sponsor.

Discussions focused on topics such as issue-prioritization, goal-setting, integrating the Global Goals into strategic planning, and building effective partnerships.

The Symposium was widely considered a success by attendees. The hashtag [#SDGsInNYC](#) was used in more than 100 tweets, showcasing the conversations and thought leadership sparked by insightful speaker commentary and audience discussion.

The United Nations launched the Global Goals for Sustainable Development in September of 2015. These global priorities set aspirations and targets to be achieved by 2030 and consist of 17 goals and associated sub-goals and targets. Learn more about the Global Goals at: <http://www.globalgoals.org/>.



“It is fantastic to see how much support and action for making the world a better place comes from businesses all over the United States. The symposium in March showed me that the times are shifting towards a mindset of sustainability in business and being open to collaboration with the public sector and governments. The private sector plays a major role in leading the way and is key to the success of the SDGs.”

—Lisa Thalheimer, Consultant, Global Climate Change Policy, The World Bank

“The meeting was informative, educative and excellent gathering for those who believe in sustainability. I believe such meeting should be a repeat event to share common goals and tackle challenges together in this moving world. I had the opportunity to meet great, smart and visionary people. I congratulate your organization for being the architect of the gathering.”

—Dr. Abass Yaya Bamba, Senior Managing Director, Y2Fox

Identifying our material issues

We define materiality analysis as a 360-degree review and prioritization of risk and opportunity that takes into account the concerns and expectations of both internal and external stakeholders. Today, with experience in conducting materiality assessments for companies of nearly every size and sector, we are among the most advanced providers of this service.

From the time when we first developed our materiality analysis process, our thesis has been that there are no such things as “nonfinancial” issues, only issues for which appropriate means of recognizing and measuring financial impacts do not yet exist.

Today, investors and companies alike are making connections that allow them to measure the financial impact of performance on those issues.

Framework’s materiality analysis process:

We identified 17 issues with high potential relevance to our business and stakeholders, as follows:

- Client satisfaction
- Community relations
- Company culture
- Compliance
- Data protection and privacy
- Diversity and inclusion
- Effective marketing
- Environmental impact
- Ethical conduct/ professional integrity
- Growth and profitability
- Occupational health and safety
- Procurement
- Professional development
- Promoting sustainability
- Quality assurance and controls
- Talent management
- Transparency and accountability

In 2005, Framework became one of the first firms to develop a formal materiality analysis process.

In 2016, more than a decade of experience and dozens of clients later, we applied the same process to determine our own material issues.

We then analyzed the level of concern surrounding each issue by surveying all Framework employees and reaching out to the following external stakeholders through an online survey:

- Clients
- Suppliers
- Former employees and interns
- Contractors

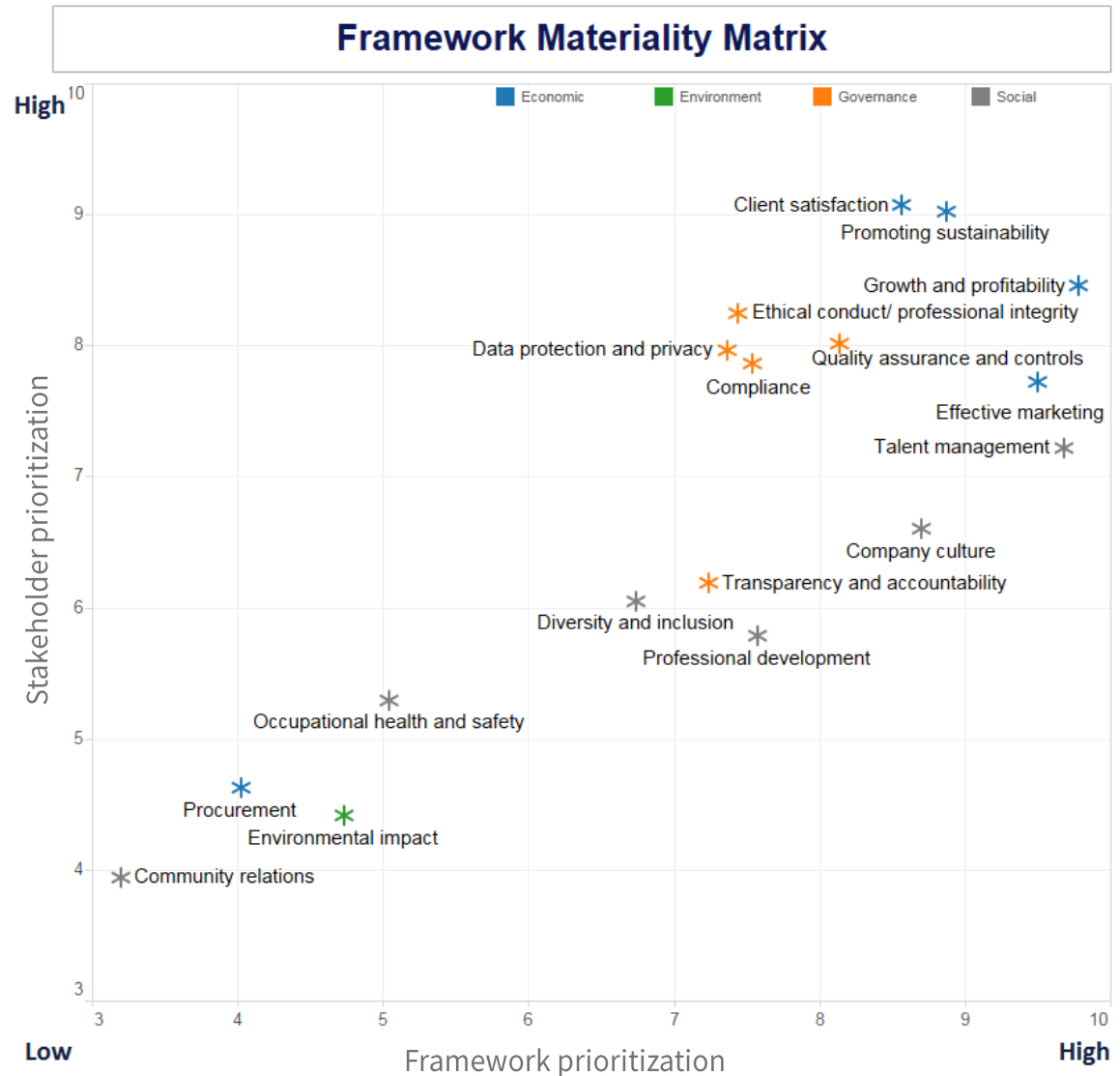
Of the 40 external stakeholders we surveyed, 29 responded—a response rate of 72.5 percent.

Identifying our material issues

Results

Based on our analysis and rankings by our external stakeholders as well as the firm's management and employees, we considered to be material those five issues appearing in the upper right-hand corner of the materiality matrix:

- Promoting Sustainability
- Client Satisfaction
- Growth and Profitability
- Effective Marketing
- Talent Management



Identifying our material issues

Insights

Framework's material issues reflect the nature of our business and the expectations of our stakeholders. We were not surprised to see Promoting Sustainability, Client Satisfaction, and Growth and Profitability appearing as very high priorities—these are issues critical to our short- and long-term viability. We need to lead with our mission and provide exemplary service while keeping a sharp eye on our balance sheet.

There is general agreement between the weight and importance we ourselves place on the issues considered in the analysis and what our stakeholders expect us to prioritize. Where variation occurs, *e.g.*, in the higher *internal* ranking for Talent Management (an issue central to our internal team) or the higher *external* ranking for Data Privacy and Protection (reflecting clients' strong interest in cybersecurity), the reasons are clear.

The issues of Environmental Impact and Community Relations appear at the low end of the materiality scale from both the internal and external perspective. As a small business, our physical footprint is minimal, and although we engage in stewardship activities such as substituting video conferencing for in-person travel, commuting to work using mass transit where possible, and minimizing the use of paper, the totality of our environmental impact is negligible compared to the change we can effect by helping our clients tackle their environmental challenges.

These examples illustrate where Framework's highest contribution to progress on the ten Global Compact principles lies. Namely, the delivery of insightful client advisory services enables us to substantively contribute to progress on human rights, labor issues, environmental protection, and anticorruption.

Framework's material issues

- Promoting Sustainability
- Client Satisfaction
- Growth and Profitability
- Effective Marketing
- Talent Management

Delivering on our priorities: Promoting Sustainability

Promoting sustainability is literally the first line of Framework’s mission statement. Drafted nearly 10 years ago, our mission puts our commitment to sustainability front and center. The quest for a more sustainable global society, economy, and planet is what drives us to excel on behalf of our clients and the firm itself. In short, it’s why each of us has chosen Framework: we believe in this work, and we believe we are making a difference with every engagement we undertake.

The primary way in which we promote sustainability—and support progress on the Global Compact’s Ten Principles—is through client service. We most frequently advise large, publicly held, U.S.-based corporations in various sectors, including chemicals, consumer packaged goods, energy, financial services, heavy industries, information technology and hardware, media, and transportation, among others.

Our direct client work is served by the considerable time and effort we dedicate to internally generated and funded research on cutting-edge topics germane to advancing the concept of Modern Management. We engage in thought-leadership activities such as publishing research papers, articles, and infographics; presenting webinars; and speaking at conferences and events.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

- *Impact and influence with clients and society*
- *Leading change to transform organizations*
- *Implementing our Mission, Vision, and Values*

Linking financial outcomes to ESG management

We are particularly interested in the relationship between a company’s management of environmental, social, and governance issues and financial outcomes such as profitability, default risk, and stock performance. As an example, in 2015 we conducted research to understand the [relationship between stock performance and gender parity on companies’ boards of directors](#). We found that a reweighted STOXX Europe 600 portfolio, tilted toward companies whose boards more closely approached gender balance, outperformed both the capitalization-weighted base index and an equal-weighted version of the base index in terms of total and risk-adjusted returns.

Framework services

Assess	Engage	Optimize
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materiality analysis • Benchmarking • Megatrends reports • Material issues ownership mapping • Metrics development • ESG research and data analysis (Bloomberg ESG and other platforms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360° disclosure and reporting (GRI, UNGC, DJSI, CDP, etc.) • Ratings and rankings improvement • Stakeholder engagement • Board, executive, and employee education and engagement • Branding • Internal communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning • Material issue action plans (MAPs) • Governance and accountability structures • Culture assessment and development • Talent analytics and employee engagement

Delivering on our priorities: Client Satisfaction

Building relationships

Building trusted, long-term client relationships is essential to our success and ability to further our mission. So we enter each new client engagement invested in the client's success and focused on delivering value aligned with their long-term objectives.

In initial conversations with prospects, we openly share our approach, culture, and expectations and ask probing questions to elicit similar information, to ensure good cultural fit. Most importantly, we explore whether a potential client is authentically committed to pursuing substantive actions and disclosures to improve their performance.

Once we enter an engagement, our role is multifaceted. Along with expertise on a wide range of ESG issues and their business and financial impacts, we deliver encouragement and support; strategies for addressing challenges; and tools, resources, and connections to people that can facilitate progress.

We also offer constructive critique, providing objective advice on proposed strategies, activities, or communications. Our aim is always to ensure credibility with internal and external stakeholders.

Measuring success

We continually work to measure, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, how successful we are in helping our clients. We do this to ensure that we continue to efficiently provide outstanding service so as to build strong, lasting partnerships with our clients—another element of our mission.

We track progress using a custom-built project-management platform and a customer-relationship-management system. We use a number of indicators to measure client satisfaction, including the average tenure of client relationships: Nearly half of our clients have worked with us for at least five years.

In addition to quantitative measures of client satisfaction, we seek qualitative feedback through a structured debrief process following the completion of every project. We use this feedback to continuously improve our technical performance and enhance our services.

CLIENT SATISFACTION

- *Client engagement*
- *Relationship strengthening*
- *Adhering to the Framework promise.*

The Framework Promise

We will

- Listen. Carefully.
- Call it as we see it.
- Keep our eye on the big picture while paying meticulous attention to the details.
- Ask you to examine your opportunities, risks, responsibilities, challenges, achievements, and shortcomings with an honest eye.
- Bear in mind the difference between “ideal” and “possible.”
- Hold ourselves and our work to exceedingly high standards.
- Be enjoyable to work with and help you through the tough days.

“Every Framework team member plays a part in building the confidence our clients have in us. We each do this by paying close attention to details, delivering the best work we can, and communicating early and often.”—**Kevin Kromash, Framework Director of Projects and Systems**

Delivering on our priorities: Growth and Profitability

We are staunch believers in the power of capitalism as an engine for positive economic and societal development. We also know that financial sustainability is essential to the viability of any business model. These beliefs guide both our work with clients and how we set our own growth and profitability goals.

Profitability, in particular, is critical to our ability to create the conditions necessary for our team members to deliver exceptional service to clients. We need to maintain healthy profit margins to be able to attract and retain the best people with competitive compensation and benefits. Profitability enables us to invest in productivity tools such as data services and project-management platforms, in IT and data-security infrastructure, and in services to advance our professional development such as research publications and conference participation. Profitability also allows us to invest in research to advance our own thinking and that of our peers and clients around the principles of sustainability, concepts of Modern Management, corporate behavior, and the financial outcomes thereof.

These investments inform our perspectives; enable us to provide exceptional service to clients, improve efficiency and productivity, and manage risk; and further our mission to promote sustainability, consciously evolve, and build strong lasting partnerships.

Framework's growth model

We seek to grow our business for one reason only: to advance our mission to promote sustainability. Our growth model consists of *intentional relationship management*, *thoughtful business development*, and *conscious capabilities evolution*.

Intentional relationship management. We place high priority on our client's interests and the long-term good of our relationship with them. By going above and beyond in supporting our clients—both in their individual career development and their corporate practices—we foster mutual, long-term growth.

Thoughtful business development. We aim to grow, but not for the sake of growth only. Our business development is strategic and undertaken so that we can grow responsibly, invest sensibly, and retain the very best aspects of our firm culture. We also seek out clients whose values and objectives align with our own.

Conscious capabilities evolution. We pursue innovation as a core value. Our early investment and expertise in the Bloomberg ESG data platform, for example, led us to be pioneers in developing novel uses of ESG data in client service and our own research. Our insights not only contribute to thought leadership but also keep us on the cutting-edge of advisory and analytics that promote more sustainable business practices.

GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY

- *Pricing, profitability, and competitiveness*
- *Ability to continue to serve clients and engage partners*
- *New and enhanced services and capabilities*
- *Cost control and efficiency*
- *Protection of intellectual property*

Organic growth for a firm of our size has its challenges. Key among them are:

- increasing competition, particularly from larger firms;
- relatively small client/company budgets for action on what often continues to be considered a cost center as opposed to a value generator;
- commoditization of some services that were once considered bespoke; and
- our own tendency to go “above and beyond” to serve a client's needs in the service of continuing and strengthening relationships.

We address these issues by investing in the development of our employees' professional capacities and expertise, continuing to deliver exceptional service to clients while improving efficiency and productivity, and developing tools and services that add value to key client services.

Delivering on our priorities: Effective Marketing

In today's din of digital messages continually clamoring for our attention, carving out a space and platform where we can introduce ourselves to prospective clients, partners, and employees takes considerable effort and attention. Most of all, we look for ways to share our capabilities in ways that provide value rather than more clutter.

Our marketing approach harkens back to our mission in being bold, thoughtful, and responsive in all we do. From extensive research white papers on sustainability practices to financial data analyses, we develop materials to share with clients and prospects that demonstrate our ability to locate and interpret complex data and help solve challenging problems. Even when recruiting, we customize our job descriptions to offer a taste of Framework's character, whether it be highlighting our culture of full engagement or pointing out our penchant for "freakishly high" quality standards. In short, we seek to put out useful and actionable information so that our stakeholders derive value from every interaction they have with us.

Our thought leadership work has been cited by Bloomberg, Harvard Business the [American Bar Association](#) and published by [American Institute of CPAs](#), [Compliance Week](#) and [Food Dive](#).

DataSlices take the stage

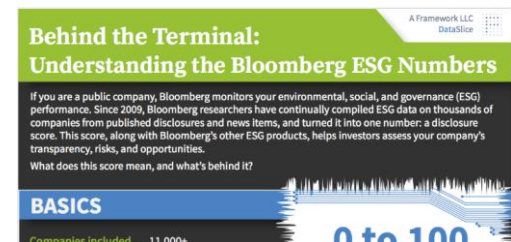
In 2015, we launched our DataSlice infographics to provide sustainability information in an engaging, succinct way. These short pieces showcase our knowledge about sustainable business practices and provide specific, actionable information about ways to enhance performance and disclosure. For example:

- The European Union Non-Financial Reporting Directive makes corporate sustainability reporting mandatory starting in 2017. [Our guide to the EU Directive](#) illustrates how this legislation affects European companies' compliance practices and clarifies classification requirements.
- Bloomberg monitors sustainability metrics for public companies and assigns scores for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosure. In [Behind the Terminal: Understanding the Bloomberg ESG Numbers](#), we explain the Bloomberg ESG score and its impact.

Our DataSlice infographic: *Behind the Terminal: Understanding the Bloomberg ESG Numbers* ranks in the top ten for Bloomberg ESG related search results.

EFFECTIVE MARKETING

- *Earning visibility through cutting-edge content and thought leadership*
 - *Effective sales techniques and systems*
 - *Sharing new ideas and unique perspectives in ways that cut through clutter*
- Winning a spot on the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) is a coveted and competitive marker of sustainability leadership. [Understanding the DJSI](#) encapsulates the value and considerations of pursuing DJSI inclusion.
 - CDP holds the world's largest collection of self-reported climate change, water and forest-risk data. In [A view from Above: Making the most of your CDP response](#), we elucidate on the CDP data, its constituents, scoring and benefits of participation.



Delivering on our priorities: Talent Management

Our talented, passionate employees make our success possible. Through the application of our collective talents, skills, and expertise, we seek to create a sustainable future for ourselves and our clients.

As a values-driven organization whose mission is to promote sustainability, we attract dedicated and passionate individuals from all disciplines and backgrounds. We are scientists, analysts, anthropologists, economists, researchers, lawyers, and communicators, all sharing a similar vision and purpose. We enjoy an energetic, intellectually stimulating work culture punctuated by moments of irreverence. We also really like dogs.

Framework seeks to engage motivated employees and produce meaningful work. As a company, we have confirmed the value of our hiring approach to understanding the strengths and thinking styles of our employees.

Our strengths-based talent management practices won us the **Best Practices Honor at the 2014 APA National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards.**

Our recruiting process is firmly rooted in identifying individuals who will bring their best selves to work every day in a spirit of full engagement. We ask applicants and new hires to take both the [StrengthsFinder](#) and [Neethling Brain Instruments \(NBI™\)](#) assessments. We use these tools not to screen out but rather to better understand each individual's ideal working style and preferences. We then refer to our strengths and right-brain/left-brain profiles in customizing roles and planning team structures, staffing for specific projects, and simply interacting with each other on a daily basis.

This strengths-based approach to optimizing our performance was featured in an August 2015 Forbes article about us, [How a Small Company Builds a Great Culture One Hire at a Time.](#)

We are in the process of developing a plan to expand the diversity and inclusion components of our recruiting efforts. Creating a diverse workplace is part of Framework's long-term strategic vision as we seek to develop creative solutions to addressing ESG issues for our clients and ourselves. By embracing different perspectives, skills, and talents, we are building a diverse workforce that enhances employee engagement and productivity and the quality and tenor of our ongoing conversations—thereby increasing the quality of our ideas and service to clients.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

- *Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talent*
- *Includes: benefits, office location, and work space; flexible work arrangements; competitive compensation*

Framework's values speak to who we are and how we work:

- Committed to a better world
- Reliable and accountable
- Positive and energetic
- Collaborative and supportive
- Pragmatic and value-focused
- Leaders and innovators
- Always learning and sharing

In 2016, Framework is updating its employee handbook to provide transparency and clarity with regard to expectations for “how we work” at Framework. Framework's significant and continuing growth brings the need to expand upon and refine existing policies, develop new ones, and clearly communicate these to employees. We see the employee handbook as the heart of the company's culture as it sets the tone of how we work and ensures that all employees are treated fairly.

Delivering on our priorities: Talent Management

Creating a culture of full engagement

We pay close attention to creating an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration, and take care to avoid “office politics” or other drama. Every employee has access to other employees and the firm’s management and is fully empowered to bring any issue to the attention of their manager or the partners. We encourage idea generation and facilitate interoffice discussion, including through weekly all-hands “Monday Morning Meetings” and periodic “Mind-Share Meetings” focused on specific topics. We also deploy anonymous surveys periodically with the support of an organizational psychologist to gauge employee satisfaction, engagement, and energy levels.

Frequent conversations and engagement opportunities in the form of casual, formal, and social events keep us connected, actively engaged, and candid with each other. And in the first week of each January we hold a day-long kick-off meeting during which we evaluate the year past and ensure alignment on focus areas for the coming quarters. During that week we hold our annual post-holiday party, complete with White Elephant gift exchange.

Benefits of working at Framework

- Competitive compensation packages, including opportunity to participate in Framework’s group health plan and 401(k) with employer match and profit-sharing contributions
- Generous time off, not based on seniority: 15 days of personal time, all federal holidays, and paid week off between Christmas and New Year’s Day
- Flexible hours and work schedules with opportunities to work from home
- Paid and unpaid family leave corresponding to seniority at the firm (including maternity/paternity leave or to care for an ill family member)
- Annual performance reviews for all employees; regular check-ins throughout the year
- Employee development and training opportunities to help individuals attain expertise in a specialized area
- Access to certified financial planners to assist in achieving personal financial goals

TALENT MANAGEMENT

- *Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talent*
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“I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to spend these early sweet days bonding with my daughter and just being there for my family. It’s still so rare for U.S. companies, especially small businesses, to offer paid parental leave, which makes me appreciate this benefit even more so. This time not only provided a sense of economic stability but also instilled a greater sense of pride in working for Framework as a workplace that understands and respects family values.” —**Michelina Docimo, Framework Director of Operations and Talent**

Delivering on our priorities: Talent Management

Promoting wellness

Framework believes all employees should work in a safe and comfortable space where they can perform at their best. Our Stamford office is equipped with the following ergonomic tools at every work station:

- Standing desks to break up long periods of sitting
- Adjustable height chairs for optimal spinal comfort
- Dual monitor screens to reduce eye strain
- Noise-cancelling headphones to dampen sound in open work spaces

Yoga balls are available as alternate seating, and employees are encouraged to take walking breaks or hold meetings outdoors for purposes of renewing energy and focus. The office layout provides everyone with access to natural light. We also have a “quiet room,” a space designed for taking private calls, meditating, or napping. Raisins, almonds, apples, clementines, and other healthy snacks are regularly on offer for morning snacking or afternoon pick-me-ups.

Framework strives to promote a healthy relationship between work and home by aiming for a forty-hour work week to the greatest degree possible given client work cycles. We encourage employees to take all of their personal time each year to reenergize and gain new experiences.

To promote employees’ health in the workplace, we ask that employees who are sick refrain from coming into the office to reduce the spread of illness. Framework has also initiated internal conversations about health and stress management to share best ways on how to address these issues when they do arise.

Supporting employee development

All Framework employees set professional development goals. Over time, individual roles are fine-tuned to maximize employees’ contributions. We also provide personalized support and peer encouragement to ensure well-rounded growth. At the same time, we allocate high levels of responsibility and independence to every employee. The entrepreneurial and fulfilling nature of our work and the spirit of the firm are an enormous factor in employee motivation and growth. At Framework, people excel because they love what they do.

We have established a paid summer internship program to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to gain experience in working for a different kind of consulting firm. These highly competitive positions infuse our office with new energy and ideas while providing a pipeline for potential future hires.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

- *Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talent*
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We recognize and appreciate talent. “NoteWorth” cards give every employee an opportunity to recognize another employee for exemplifying Framework’s values. Each card represents a value, which is listed on the reverse side. Employees handwrite a brief message on the blank side of the card and hand it to the person who they feel has demonstrated true Framework value. The recipient also receives a **taco token** to a local restaurant.



73 candidates applied for the two positions available in Framework’s 2016 summer internship program.

About this report

In 2015, Framework became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact. In this, our first Communication on Progress, we evaluate how our business and values align with the ten UNGC Principles. We also discuss how we help our clients enhance their performance and disclosure on human rights, labor, environmental, and anti-corruption issues.

This report includes the underlying methodology used to determine our material issues, the results of that assessment, and future directions for our company. With this report, we reinforce our commitment to the Global Compact, to our clients, and to the right way to do business: sustainably.

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Strategies for Sustainable Advantage