

## PRESS RELEASE



Photo: © Maurice Spees for The Natural Step Germany

18 January 2018

### WHY THE NEW C-SUITE HAS TO GO SOCIAL

2018 is a challenging year for leadership development. Industries are disrupted, markets are shifting and changing. So are the C-suites and leadership teams. What we can see happening is that forward-thinking CEOs apply the systems view and lead through a shared purpose. They embrace purpose to achieve positive value creation in a broader context, connecting their organisations with society and the environment.

### CHANGES AT THE C-LEVEL

Dynamics are shifting to a more integrative leadership model based on systems thinking and effective partnerships. At The Natural Step Germany, we share the thoughts of [Russell Reynolds](#) published on trends in the C-suite. There is a definite shift towards flatter hierarchies and a more egalitarian work environment. New leadership styles will adopt a more group-minded approach without compromising on effectiveness and performance. At The Natural Step Germany, we are passionate about helping executives to find the right balance in order to create a culture that is open, collaborative and diverse.

### CEO ACTIVISM

More and more CEOs emerge as visionary, conscious leaders, for example Ken Frazier, Merck Chairman and CEO. He resigned from President Trump's [American Manufacturing Council](#) in objection to Mellody Hobson, the president's response to the violence in Charlottesville last summer. Mellody Hobson, the president of Ariel Investments, advocates for more inclusive corporate leadership, given fewer than seven per cent of Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs. The need for greater respect and opportunities for women will again be a core topic at this year's [World Economic Forum](#).

## PRESS RELEASE

### THE NATURAL STEP'S NEW INITIATIVE "FUTURE-FIT ORGANISATIONS"

Together with [Sustainable Growth Associates](#) (SGA) and taskforce, The Natural Step Germany recently started its new initiative "Future-Fit Organisations". The [initiative](#) comprises trainings and workshops to accelerate purpose-driven leadership, systems thinking and social responsibility. CEOs who like to catch the opportunity to affirm their purpose, mission and core values, can count on help from The Natural Step Germany. Our guiding themes:

- Creating and communicating an authentic voice needs a strategy and takes time. We recommend that CEOs start early.
- Intelligent prioritisation, in line with the company's broader purpose, increases the likelihood of measurable value creation. Hence, CEOs should promote issues that bear a tangible connection to their business.
- Building a group of co-activists is always a good idea, for example by recruiting and promoting highly-motivated senior leaderships and involving partners and relevant stakeholders. Please be aware that the most authentic voices will still come from the top, and the public will quickly recognise when the CEO is not speaking from the heart.

### WHY DO WE NEED C-SUITES WITH THE COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT?

Looking forward to the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 starting soon, Dirk Uhlemann, Managing Director and Advisor at The Natural Step Germany, commented: "We need forward-thinking CEOs who join with labor leaders and civil society to shape a different future. In this future, peace, democracy, rights and freedoms will matter, and global rules such as the [SDGs](#) will apply to everyone."

### ABOUT THE NATURAL STEP GERMANY

The Natural Step Germany is part of The Natural Step's global network, a highly respected provider of science-based sustainable development, innovation, consulting and education programmes. As a non-profit organisation, The Natural Step helps organisations and individuals create value within the planetary boundaries. Since its inception in Stockholm in 1989, The Natural Step's science-based framework has been successfully employed in thousands of forward-thinking organisations around the world. Based on systems thinking, it helps organisations and individuals understand and accelerate change towards sustainability and a flourishing future. More about can be found [here](#).

## PRESS RELEASE

### CONTACTS

DIRK UHLEMANN  
Managing Director & Advisor  
Tel. +49 89 212312141  
[dirk.uhlemann@thenaturalstep.de](mailto:dirk.uhlemann@thenaturalstep.de)

RÜDIGER RÖHRIG, DIPL. ING.  
Director & Advisor  
Tel. +49 89 212312142  
[ruediger.roehrig@thenaturalstep.de](mailto:ruediger.roehrig@thenaturalstep.de)

GABRIELE SORG  
Marketing Communications & PR  
Tel. +49 89 212312145  
[gabriele.sorg@thenaturalstep.de](mailto:gabriele.sorg@thenaturalstep.de)

THE NATURAL STEP GERMANY  
Pasinger Strasse 2  
D-82152 Planegg  
Tel: +49 89 212312140  
[hello@thenaturalstep.de](mailto:hello@thenaturalstep.de)  
[www.thenaturalstep.de](http://www.thenaturalstep.de)