

# Foreword

by *Stefano Caselli*

We are living in times that are simultaneously fascinating and complex. As a leading business school, our academic nature and mission as educators propel us to trace back to the forces shaping our social context, identifying emerging trends and new dimensions that need to be quantified, measured, and managed.

The world of business, as well as the context it operates in, is completely transformed. We face a series of formidable challenges brought about by the intensity of technological progress and societal changes. Artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, regenerative medicine, energy, migration, inequality are just a few of the hurdles we must collectively address to maintain balanced and inclusive economic growth.

Over the years, companies have shown a great capacity to capture and respond to the needs expressed by society, sometimes anticipating trends more nimbly than other entities such as the media and governmental and non-governmental organizations. They have adeptly addressed, with a better vision and perspective, the needs expressed by various actors, needs that only partially relate to profit.

In modern times, companies have been able to respond to a range of issues. Particularly in western economies, a trusted collaboration has been created between these significant corporations and citizens, with the former often acting as “problem solvers”, supporting governments and other institutional actors in meeting the needs of the population.

This trust in large companies has prompted them to undertake increasingly significant roles, pushing them to embrace topics that range far beyond their specific industrial sector. Companies today promote policies on issues such as social security and the environment, demonstrating a positive synergy with governmental policies.

However, previously adopted Corporate Social Responsibility policies and the more recent ESG policies, while of vital importance, are not always capable of fully addressing the ever-new and changing challenges of our time. Faced with this situation, companies often take the initiative to adapt and directly respond to the real needs of both the market and the population at large.

It is therefore crucial to understand how companies can play a key role in this new social position, going beyond mere financial analysis of business results, creating a constructive dialogue with political institutions for shared and sustainable growth.

“Influence, Relevance and Growth (IRG) for a Changing World. How to Survive & Thrive beyond ESG World” and the author’s proposed solution are timely and pragmatic. He represents a forecast in a post-sustainability world where ESG continues to play a pivotal role for transparency, accountability, and general awareness on the need to firmly tackle environmental challenges. The IRG incorporates and accounts for its successes.

The IRG metric thus allows measuring, through the analysis of 10 parameters, whether and how much a company is ready to confront and manage these new challenges or position itself as an intermediary subject, bridging existing gaps between the needs expressed by the population and the responses of political decision-makers. Companies, in fact, do not seek to replace politics, but propose themselves as useful partners to help the political scene be more responsive to the needs of citizens.

Today, issues such as the introduction of artificial intelligence, climate change-related issues, and the use of various energy sources, ethical issues related to regenerative medicine, and genetically modified food are being addressed. These are topics where the combined contribution of politics and businesses can make a difference.

The IRG indicators therefore represent the latest tool that allows companies to self-assess - and external stakeholders to evaluate - the capacity to respond to these issues.

IRG is based on 10 quantifiable parameters that, leveraging artificial intelligence, measure whether a company is ready or not to operate in this new environment, where critical skills must be transferred to other interested parties to regain balance over time. In this way, the possibility of a fruitful synergy between companies and political decision-makers to tackle the future challenges is enhanced.

# Acknowledgements

My first debt of gratitude is to my former partners Reggie Van Lee, Mark Gerencser and Kris Kelly, from Booz Allen Hamilton, where I have been privileged to spend 20 years of my working life. The IRG system follows work co-authored with them. Rocco Sabelli was the first to suggest that I needed to write a book, setting me on this journey with the invaluable support of an Irish writer and others.

As I progressed, I benefited from the constructive critiques of thought leaders from my work of the last thirty years. My generous friend and former colleague Pietro Candela pioneered with me the early IRG architecture. Fulvio Conti and Francesco Starace helped illuminate the path through feedback that highlighted new dimensions. My conversations with Fedele Confalonieri and Paolo Scaroni contributed to appreciate world's affairs and human beings' behavior with more realism. It is encouraging to see leaders of diverse industries and professions share the same sense of urgency. Luigi Ferraris was a valued early advocate, and Giuseppe Castagna, Rocco Sabelli, Bill Mayer and Ron Spogli added global perspectives from finance, engineering pragmatism and multiculturalism. Anthony Viscusi's "red pencil" was the ultimate test for the content and the narrative. David Rhodes provided a precious media foresight.

Richard Viator's irreproachable academic rigor helped me marshal the feedback from the professional and industrial experiences of Lucio Stanca, Stefano Sala, Martin Brannigan, Claudio Vaccarella, Suzanne Helm, Ryan O'Keefe, Francesco Taranto, Salvo Arena, Gregorio Consoli, Filippo Modulo, Jeff Libshutz, Angelo De Tomasi, Agostino Carloni, Gina Nieri, Mike Nowlis, Marco Andreassi, Alessandro Fracassi, Corrado Passera, Libby Fidler, Haresh Patel, Tim Buchner, Francesco Cardinali, Luca Tor-

chia, Matteo Cidda, Massimo Angelini, Ferdinando Pozzani, Jeffrey Hedberg, Egidio Pardini, Ketty Maisonrouge, Angelo Maria Petroni and Jules Goffre. I am grateful to all.

Special thanks to Stefano Caselli and KC Sullivan for their generosity in writing the preface and afterword. Gimede Gigante and Andrea Cerri for their academic advice.

I have been particularly privileged in my life to be surrounded since I can remember by such smart people. It was so since the outset in the form of my scientist father, the late Luigi Gerardo Napolitano, whose intellect so influenced me. None of this could have been achieved without the constant and enduring support and serenity of my immediate family members Matilde, Allegra, Anastasia and Luigi Gerardo, who challenge me in our frequent discussions. And Saigon, our dog, my companion as I distilled my thoughts on our long walks in Todi.