



John Elkington

Founding Partner & Director, [Volans](#) (2008 to date)

Founder & Non-Executive Director, [SustainAbility](#) (1987–2008)

Personal website: www.johnelkington.com

Recent presentations: click [here](#)¹

Recent media coverage: click [here](#)²

John Elkington, Founding Partner & Director of **Volans** (launched in April 2008) and Founder of **SustainAbility** in 1987 (Chair from 1995-2005) is a world authority on corporate responsibility and sustainable development. In 1989, John was elected to the UN Global 500 Roll of Honour for his “outstanding environmental achievements”. In 2004, *Interiors & Sources* magazine in the US profiled him as an ‘Environmental Trailblazer’ and *BusinessWeek* described him as “a dean of the corporate responsibility movement for three decades.” In 2008, *The Evening Standard* named John among the '1000 Most Influential People' in London, describing him as "a true green business guru," and as "an evangelist for corporate social and environmental responsibility long before it was fashionable."

Volans, launched in April 2008, aims to find, explore, advise on and build innovative scalable solutions to the great global divides that overshadow the future. Volans' first report, ***The Phoenix Economy: 50 Pioneers in the Business of Social Innovation***, explores a new economic order rising from the ashes with a new generation of innovators, entrepreneurs and investors accelerating the changes essential for delivering scalable sustainable solutions to the world. The study reveals how these groups are thinking as they develop and scale market solutions to a broad array of economic, social, environmental and governance challenges and proposes a 'Phoenix Agenda' for enabling a paradigm shift and sets out how governments, investors businesses and business schools can best support new market pioneers. The report launched in March 2009 at the Skoll World Forum with backing from the Skoll Foundation, SustainAbility, Singapore's Economic Development Board, Net Impact and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Established in 1987, **SustainAbility** advises clients on the risks and opportunities associated with corporate responsibility and sustainable development. Working at the interface between market forces and societal expectations, SustainAbility seeks solutions to social and environmental challenges that deliver long term value. With offices in London, Zurich, New York and Washington, DC and team members representing more than ten nationalities, SustainAbility works with leading companies, NGOs and influencers around the world. Clients include ABN Amro, BP, Coca-Cola, Ford, Microsoft, Nestlé, Nike, Norwich Union, Shell, Swiss Re, Unilever and Wal-Mart. A global network of experts and partners helps SustainAbility to track emerging agendas, evaluate the market implications and engage business and its main stakeholders worldwide.

¹ <http://www.volans.com/volans-outreach/keynote/>

² <http://www.volans.com/volans-outreach/volans-media/>

Writing

John's latest book is on entrepreneurial solutions and particularly on the work of leading social and environmental entrepreneurs. Co-authored with Pamela Hartigan, at the time the Managing Director of [The Schwab Foundation](#) and now a Founding Partner of Volans Ventures, [The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets That Change the World](#), was published by Harvard Business School Press on 5th February 2008.

John has authored or co-authored another 16 books and some 40 published reports, including the No.1 best-selling [Green Consumer Guide](#) and [The Chrysalis Economy: How Citizen CEOs and Corporations Can Fuse Values and Value Creation](#) (Capstone, Oxford/John Wiley, New York 2001).

His book [Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business](#) (Capstone, 1997/New Society 1998) was a finalist in the Global Business Book of the Year Award, organised by the *Financial Times* and Booz-Allen Hamilton.

Other books have included:

- [The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets That Change the World \(Harvard Business School Press, 2008\)](#), foreword by [Klaus Schwab](#). Also published in Portuguese, Japanese, Italian (Vietnamese in press)
- [The Chrysalis Economy: How Citizen CEOs and Corporations Can Fuse Values and Value Creation](#) (Capstone, Oxford/John Wiley, New York 2001)
- *The New Foods Guide* (Gollancz, 1999)
- *Manual 2000: Life Choices for the Future You Want* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1998)
- [Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business](#) (Capstone, 1997/New Society 1998)
- *Holidays That Don't Cost the Earth* (Gollancz, 1992)
- *The Green Business Guide: How to Take Up - and Profit from - the Environmental Challenge* (Gollancz, 1992), co-authored with Peter Knight and Julia Hailes
- *A Year in the Greenhouse: An Environmental Diary* (Gollancz, 1990)
- *The Young Green Consumer Guide* (Gollancz, 1990)
- *The Green Consumer's Supermarket Shopping Guide* (Gollancz, 1989)
- *The Green Consumer Guide 1988*
- *Green Pages: The Business of Saving the World* (Routledge, 1988), co-authored with Tom Burke and Julia Hailes
- *The Green Capitalists: How Industry Can Make Money - and Protect the Environment* (Gollancz, 1987), co-authored with John Elkington
- *The Gene Factory* (Century, 1985)
- *The Poisoned Womb* (Viking/Pelican, 1985)
- *Sun Traps* (Pelican, 1984)
- *The Ecology of Tomorrow's World* (Associated Business Press, 1980)

John has written hundreds of articles for newspapers, magazines and journals, and was Editor of *Biotechnology Bulletin* from 1982 to 1995, producing over 170 issues. He has also been a regular contributor to [New Scientist](#) on environmental, energy and development issues (1975-78), *Tomorrow* magazine (1995-2000) and [The Guardian](#) (1981-2001). He contributes regular columns to [Nikkei Ecology](#) in Japan, [chinadialogue](#) in China, Brazil's [Época Negócios](#), and [Director](#) magazine in the UK as well as other media.

Public Speaking

John has spoken at over 500 conferences and other events throughout the world, among them the annual meetings of the [World Economic Forum](#), of which he was a Faculty member from 2002 to 2008. He moderated sessions in New York (2002), at Davos (2003 through to 2008) and in Palo Alto (2007) and Dalian, China (2007).

John's presentation portfolio includes the following subjects:

- successive societal pressure waves on business
- the evolution of the sustainability agenda
- sustainability strategies for business
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- The Triple Bottom Line (John coined the phrase in 1994)
- social and environmental innovation and entrepreneurship
- the business case – and business models – for change
- The Phoenix Economy: 50 pioneers in social innovation
- Pathways to Scale: how change happens

Advisory Boards / Committees

In addition to his role at Volans and SustainAbility, John is a Visiting Professor at the **Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility**, [Cranfield University School of Management](#) and:

- Member of [2degrees](#) Advisory Board
- Chair, [Aflatoun](#) Impact and Policy Analysis Steering Group
- Senior Advisor, [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#), spun off by Amnesty International
- Member of newly formed [Cleantech Group](#) LLC's **Cleantech Innovation Council**
- Member of the Advisory Board, [Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes \(DJSI\)](#)
- Member of [EcoVadis](#) Advisory Board
- Member of Advisory Panel for the first annual [Environmental Defense](#) Innovations report
- Chair of [The Environment Foundation](#)
- Member of the **Evian Group Brain Trust and Council of Global Thought Leaders**
- Founding Member of [Gaia Energy](#) Advisory Board
- Board Member of the [Global Reporting Initiative](#) (GRI)
- Member of [Greenopolis.com](#) Advisory Council
- Member of the [Global Leaders Academy](#)
- Honorary Fellow of [The Hub](#)
- Honorary Fellow of [Institute of Green Professionals](#)
- Member of the International Advisory Board of [Instituto Ethos](#), Brazil
- Member of Strategic Advisory Board of [Physic Ventures](#)
- Member of Strategic Advisory Board of [Polecat UK](#)
- Member of the [Sea Change](#) Advisory Board
- Member of Cambridge Research Advisory Group for [University of Cambridge Programme for Industry](#) (CPI)
- Member of the [WWF Council of Ambassadors](#)
- Member, Cleantech Industry Advisory Group, [Zouk Ventures](#).

Among other director, trustee or advisory committee roles he has worked with the following:

- Member of the Board Sustainable Development Committee at **Anglian Water**
- Non-executive director of the **Association of Environmental Consultancies (AEC)**
- Member of Chairman's Gold Award Panel, **BP**
- **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre**, spun off by Amnesty International (Member of the Board of Trustees)
- **Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB)**
- **Chartered Association of Certified Accountants** (ACCA: reporting awards)
- **Community Affairs Briefing**

- **Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)**
- **Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD)** Advisory Council (as Chairman for several years)
- Member of Council of the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)**
- **ICI Polyurethanes**
- Member of Council of the **Institute for Social & Ethical Accountability (ISEA)**
- **Institute of Environmental Management (IEM)**
- **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)**
- **Merlin Ecology Fund**
- **National Provident Institution (NPI)**
- **National Wildlife Federation's Corporate Conservation Council (NWF)**
- **Nature Conservancy Council (NCC)**
- Member, Advisory Council, **Royal Society of Arts (RSA)**
- **Better Environment Awards for Industry (BEAFI)**
- **Storebrand**
- **Tioxide**
- **World Resources Institute (WRI).**

He was Chairman of the Board of the Environment Faculty, **Herning Institute of Business Administration & Technology**, Denmark, from 1995 to 1998. And he was a member of the **European Union Consultative Forum on the Environment and Sustainable Development** (1994-2001).

Previous Experience

Prior to co-founding SustainAbility, from 1983-88, John ran an independent environmental consultancy, which subsequently merged into SustainAbility. He was a co-founder of Environmental Data Services Ltd (ENDS) in 1978, was Founder-Editor of the highly respected *ENDS Report*, and was Managing Director of ENDS from 1981 to 1983. Prior to that he worked as Senior Planner and Associate at Transport & Environment Studies (TEST: 1974-1978).

Education

John has a BA in Sociology & Social Psychology from the University of Essex (1970) and an M Phil in Urban & Regional Planning from University College London (1974). A 1981 Churchill Fellow, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and was for many years also a Fellow of the Institute of Directors (IoD) and a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Strategic Planning Society.

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