



REFINITIV EXPERT TALK

COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP ARENA

Refinitiv and Fortune have joined forces to showcase and celebrate the companies that are leading the way in data-driven sustainability performance. This new partnership heralds the start of a long-term collaborative effort to deliver unique insights and tangible metrics that will drive the sustainability decisions of the future.

Fortune's annual "[Change the World List](#)" has been recognizing companies that choose to tackle fundamental social issues through their organizational strategies since 2015, but this year, a new Refinitiv-Fortune partnership has created a list of "[Sustainability All Stars](#)" to rank the companies that are at the forefront of environmental leadership.

For the first time, the modules included on each company page for Fortune's Change the World franchise now feature [Refinitiv Sustainable Leadership Monitor](#) (SLM) data. Essentially, each company is assigned a score based on Refinitiv's SLM, an innovative, data-driven app created to aggregate environmental, social and governance (ESG) as well as financial data in order to analyze the long-term direction, progress and sustainable initiatives of companies.

Following the publication of the first Sustainability All Stars rankings, Refinitiv asked some key members of the Fortune team to elaborate on the strengths and highlights of the new partnership – and to share their views on trends and future developments in the ESG arena.

Five partnership takeaways

Q1: What sparked this new collaboration?

Fortune Account Director, Sarah Weitzman, explains that the seeds of the partnership were sown at Davos 2019, when Fortune CEO, Alan Murray, and Refinitiv CEO, David Craig, began a conversation about the benefits of collaboration. A subsequent meeting with the Fortune team, Refinitiv CMO, Eileen Lynch, and Shannon Joly, Global Head of Brand Activation brought to life the foundational aspirations of the partnership and from there it took flight.

Weitzman explains that the clear alignment between the two companies' goals and ethos, combined with the fact that both are newly independent companies on similar trajectories, created a natural partnership and an easy fit.

Q2: What have the highlights of the partnership been?

Weitzman believes that the true highlight of the partnership to date is embodied in the Sustainability All Stars list itself, describing it as a unique offering to the Fortune audience, and one that created an immediate value-add and enhanced the narrative around each company's strategy, focus and goals.

Change the World Editor Matt Heimer also points to the inaugural Fortune Brainstorm Finance conference as an example of how the partnership ran smoothly right from the get-go.

The 2019 New York gathering of thought leaders – from established financial services industry heavyweights to emerging fintechs – saw Refinitiv play an instrumental role in ensuring that the event was both highly anticipated and well-attended.

Heimer comments that Refinitiv attendees took an interest in a range of panel discussions, offering pertinent insights, asking smart questions and showing an immediate commitment to the broader partnership initiative, in effect proving once again that collaboration leads to benefits for all stakeholders.

Q3: How has Refinitiv's data added value?

Heimer explains that in the ESG arena, metrics can sometimes be fuzzy and performance can be hard to quantify in absolute terms. Refinitiv's deep archive of data solves this dilemma by providing a scorecard to lend shape and context to a company's key ESG-related activities.

SLM aims to help the private sector make more informed decisions about relationships and investments, and it does this by taking a data-centric approach to analyzing what companies are achieving over the long term in key areas such as environmental innovation, the efficient use of resources and sustainable efforts to limit emissions.

The inclusion of SLM scores in the Sustainability All Stars ranking provides a fresh perspective on how companies can adopt strategies that can literally change the world.

Q4: Were there any surprises in the 2019 Sustainability All Stars list?

It was perhaps surprising that several established financial services firms scored particularly highly on the SLM. Lloyds Banking Group, Santander Brasil and Prudential Financial all earned environmental scores above 90 and were awarded coveted spots in the Sustainability Top 10.

Heimer adds that seeing their scores encouraged him to dig deeper into how these organizations have been working to promote sustainable practices, including supporting greener energy initiatives and investing in long-term strategies to protect the planet.

Q5: What's currently trending in the ESG space?

Companies in general are more willing and eager to make themselves accountable to their shareholders when it comes to their ESG strategies and track records, but they need to be able to quantify and demonstrate progress in this area.

This is where data can make a real difference and we are seeing a stronger trend towards adopting a data-centric approach and harnessing the power of data to measure, analyze and communicate progress in the ESG space.

As with all data, it remains a case of “garbage in, garbage out,” which is why every Refinitiv ESG data point is rigorously quality controlled, standardized, comparable and reliable.

Looking ahead

Building sustainability into every strategic investment or operational decision is now crucial, but in order to do this effectively, companies need access to complete data and informed insights – both of which the Refinitiv/Fortune partnership can deliver.

Both companies believe in the power of working together to harness their best-in-class capabilities and this initial phase of the new partnership is just the springboard for future collaboration.

As Murray concludes, “Refinitiv is a trusted provider of quality data. We are eager to work with them and there is much more we can do together. I would like to see this partnership deepen in the future.”

Refinitiv is one of the world's largest providers of financial markets data and infrastructure, serving over 40,000 institutions in over 190 countries. It provides leading data and insights, trading platforms, and open data and technology platforms that connect a thriving global financial markets community – driving performance in trading, investment, wealth management, regulatory compliance, market data management, enterprise risk and fighting financial crime.

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