How we developed our most ambitious Advancing Sustainability 2030 goals

In 1996, Dell was one of the first technology companies to offer recycling to customers, while other industry leaders were still cautious to adopt sustainable practices.

Since then, we have prioritized designing for recyclability and evolving a global sustainability practice. Our goals are driven by the idea of a circular economy in which waste becomes obsolete.

"We want to be realistic and build on our strengths. We have an amazing supply chain, outstanding teams of innovative engineers and deep relationships with our customers. The momentum for the circular economy is emerging from many different stakeholders," says David Lear, vice president of corporate sustainability at Dell Technologies.

As part of the 2020 social impact plan, Dell recovered 2 billion pounds of used electronics and used 100 million pounds of recycled material in new products.

Moonshot goals:

- By 2030, for every product a customer buys, we will reuse or recycle an equivalent product.
- 100% of our packaging will be made from recycled or renewable material.
- More than half of our product content will be made from recycled or renewable material.
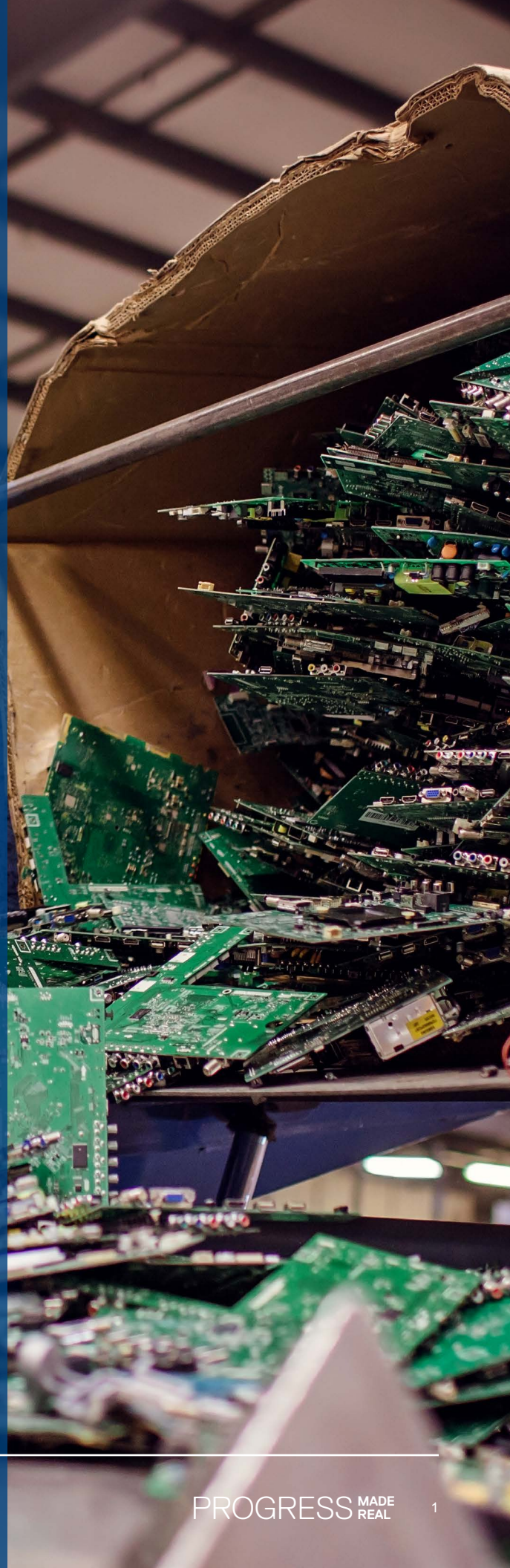
Recycling and reuse at parity with new production

To learn what's most important to customers when it comes to recycling, Lear's team data-mined requests for proposal.

"We had already integrated a lot of recycled content into our products over the last 15 years," Lear says. "We knew we were effective at managing the supply chain and materials. What would happen if we started completely designing our products with the idea of getting them back?"

The team interviewed some of the most progressive companies, which asked Dell Technologies for breakthroughs in such areas as recycling or energy use. They also solicited input from interest groups and non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International, Greenpeace and the Nature Conservancy, some of which have long-standing relationships with Dell Technologies. They combined these findings with a materiality assessment to define what's critical for the company when it comes to sustainability.

The Advancing Sustainability focus area already had good momentum through the recent work on the 2020 goals; however, achieving 100 percent product recycling or reuse for every new product purchased also requires the support of customers and partners around the globe.

"Everybody needs to own their piece of this, our employees as well as our customers and partners. The circular process requires systemic management and reporting across the entire value chain," says Lear.

Ensuring transparency and building trust

Dell was a founding member of the Responsible Business Alliance in 2004 and worked to drive continuous-improvement standards for worker protections and sustainability through the layers of the supply chain.

Since then, supply chain management at Dell Technologies has been highly transparent for customers and will become more so with Progress Made Real. To enable transparency, the sustainability team

developed a comprehensive data collection and reporting mechanism for the moonshot and other goals and the various contributing activities.

Every business unit has custom-designed scorecards to track progress between now and 2030, and the executive team receives in-depth reports twice a year. In collaboration with Dell Technologies' risk management experts, sustainability team members ensured that their documentation and reporting could withstand any challenge or audit from customers or investors.

The people who manage customer accounts and partner relationships are at the forefront of communicating the sustainability goals with external stakeholders. For both direct sales and partner channels, marketers are creating materials with sustainability goal messages that are easy to communicate and remember.

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> Vice President of Corporate Sustainability

Extending the value chain for social impact

Ambitious objectives—for example, for reducing power use or drawing more on renewable sources—round out the moonshot goals. Dell maintains a balanced portfolio with goals that matter to all our customers and most communities and governments.

The sustainability strategies and expectations of Dell Technologies' partners and customers drive a high priority for goals that reach across the supply chain instead of just focusing on internal processes.

"Some of our customers rely on us to help them reach their own goals for a net-zero carbon footprint, especially in their data centers," Lear says.

Some Dell Technologies suppliers have their own complementary sustainability offerings. For example, Dell's supplier Carbon Conversions provides recycled carbon fiber from the aerospace industry; they worked with Dell to develop a process for using the material in laptops.

Cross-industry collaborations for sustainability

The concept of a circular economy involves more than today's partners and providers: it extends across the industries that create and distribute the many materials that go into the company's products.

"Our bigger vision is not just this idea of closed-loop recycling, where we're taking Dell Technologies waste and putting it back into our products," Lear says. "To get materials flowing to the right place at the right time, we need to feed into other global supply chains outside of the computer or even the electronics industry. As we connect to these industries, eventually we may no longer have to ship materials around the world."

During the next 10 years, Lear expects a vast effort in developing external collaborations and in understanding and documenting production and distribution conditions in global industries and societies.

Employee innovation paves the way toward 2030

The sustainability initiative also offers several ways for Dell Technologies employees to pursue their environmental and social impact inspirations. The team has created an innovation incubator, which gives employees a structure to create and submit a business case for innovations that can advance environmentally sound business practices.

"The innovation incubator gives our talented, creative people a forum for presenting their great ideas, which people from across the business units will review. If a concept merits development, they can move it forward and present it to decision makers who can authorize funding for it," Lear explains.

Dell also tapped into the power of employee innovation summits to drive sustainability. A recent example comes from an internal hackathon to support partner CDP (formely known as the Carbon Disclosure Project). More than 600 employees in 150 teams collaborated to apply data science techniques to identify new insights and opportunities with CDP's date.

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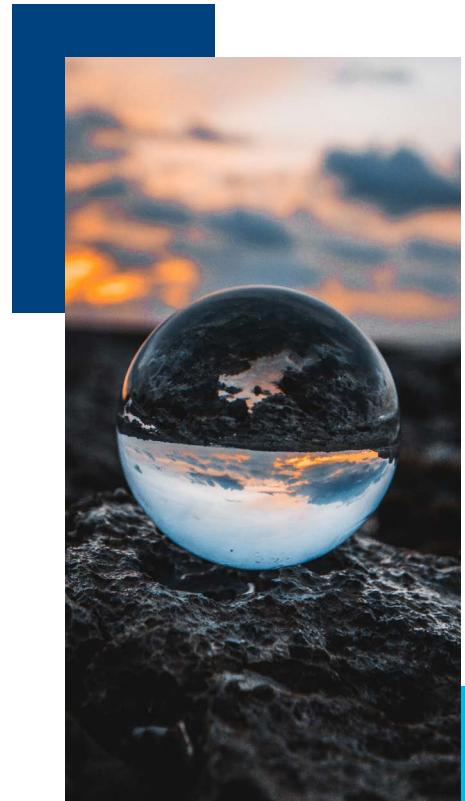
"The innovation incubator gives our talented, creative people a forum for presenting a great idea."

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Taking the next steps together

We have shared the back-story on why and how we developed Progress Made Real because we feel collaboration is key to supporting our customers, communities, industry peers and stakeholders in their own social impact journeys. By offering a view into the thinking and planning of our plan, we're inviting conversation on how social impact planning can help plot the right steps forward for our societies and the environment. So many of our customers and partners create innovative solutions, have exceptional talent, and already make the world a better place by addressing the problems we face. We would encourage you to contact your sales representatives about how together we can make a positive social impact.

Contact the Progress Made Real Team at SocialImpact@Dell.com

Learn more about Dell Technologies' social impact activities and outcomes.

See updates on our progress toward moonshots and other goals.

Download the Progress Made Real Plan.

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