

Leadership and investment are key to addressing sustainability challenges

When it comes to sustainability, there's no time to waste. That's why Verdier & Co. Corporate Advisory recently gathered a group of senior executives from top-tier companies and investment funds for a ground-breaking executive breakfast at The Lansdowne Club in Mayfair. The event, moderated by Jean-Philippe Verdier, brought together a diverse group of corporate leaders (many B Corp like Verdier & Co.) and investors from various industries to discuss sustainability strategies and global trends in sustainability skills.

The roundtable discussion was nothing short of inspiring. Katy Jarratt, Leader of the Sustainability Practice at Spencer Stuart, and Dr Serge Younes, Head of Sustainability at Investindustrial, led a Q&A session that covered everything from board ESG oversight to effective communication of sustainability strategies to stakeholders.

Dr Younes highlighted the importance of understanding the motivations of different stakeholders within a company. *“The CEO, supply chain manager, and HR manager, for example, are likely to have distinct motivations influenced by their specific responsibilities and positions. By considering these factors, you can effectively engage with your audience and convey your message in a way that resonates with them.”*

Katy Jarratt emphasised the high demand for people with RSE skills in the market. *“Professionals with real, concrete expertise in RSE are highly sought after and attract numerous recruiters due to their scarcity in the job market. However, despite a genuine desire among the board of directors in large corporations to delve deeper into RSE issues, the subject often remains insufficiently addressed in practice within the context of corporate governance.”*

Verdier & Co. presented a visual bridge highlighting the value creation opportunities of solid sustainability strategy: new products/ services; regulatory cost savings; decreased cost of financing; increased attractiveness related EV/EBITDA multiples, ... They are experiencing a rising demand from clients on two fronts: understanding the tangible impact of effective RSE policies on company valuation and on shareholder relationships. Sometimes it requires divesting non-aligned divisions in parallel with acquiring businesses presenting RSE-aligned new competencies, products/ services, or markets. Verdier & Co.'s capability in Greentech enables them to effectively advise clients in these fields.

The Executive Breakfast was an eye opener, bringing together B Corp leaders to discuss the most pressing sustainability challenges of our time. The event showed that when we collaborate and share insights, we can make real progress toward a sustainable future.

Verdier & Co. was established in early 2016 by Jean-Philippe Verdier after 20+ years of corporate finance with BNP Paribas, Deutsche Bank, Greenhill & Co. and Jefferies, principally in London, and Paris.