Interview

Futures Thinking: The case of ECOR

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Abstract

This interview is part of a research project which aims to formulate an interdisciplinary systematic approach based on Circular Economy (CE) principles and Futures Studies (FS) methods for anticipatory decision making in SMEs. The interest in interviewing Mr. Eric Logtens, CEO of Noble Environmental Technologies Corporation Europe (NETE), arises as he is a global expert in CE and one of the very early adopters to apply its principles. The interview questions were inspired by the publication Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transforming (Inayatullah, 2008). Mr. Logtens answers to these questions provide a thought-provoking viewpoint on NETE and the future of humankind.

Keywords

Introduction

I had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Eric Logtens on February 13th, 2020 (a couple of weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic started to spread globally). Mr. Logtens is a global expert and pioneer on Circular Economy (CE). The interest in interviewing him arises as he is one of the very early adopters to apply the principles of the CE in Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). With an educational background in ergonomics and human behavioural change, Mr. Logtens became one of the first entrepreneurs to embrace the cradle-to-cradle design protocols, one of the schools of thought from which the concept of CE has evolved. In 2009, Mr. Logtens founded the first full operational lease firm in the office furniture industry where the change from sales of products transitioned into the service of comfort and availability whilst proving the transformation from "Total Cost of Ownership" into "Earning by Usership".

Fig. 1: Mr. Eric Logtens

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After building multiple innovative companies Mr. Logtens went on a quest for better materials which can be kept in endless cycles. He learned about the technological innovation ECOR (Enabling Co-Creativity, Co-Operation, Co-Responsibility), an environmentally friendly and cradle-to-cradle versatile material commercialised by Noble Environmental Technologies Corporation (NET). Mr. Logtens joined NET in 2015 and since then has been the CEO of Noble Environmental Technologies Corporation in Europe (NETE) and the Corporate Director of Circular Economy.

This interview is part of a research project led by Ricardo Weigend from the Resource Efficient Built Environmental Lab (REBEL), at Edinburgh Napier University. In this project research the aim is to formulate an interdisciplinary systematic approach based on Circular Economy principles and Futures Studies methods for anticipatory decision making in SMEs.

Throughout this interview, the questions asked to Mr. Logtens were inspired by the Futures Journal publication of "Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transforming" (Inayatullah, 2008). The Six Pillars approach was developed by Dr. Sohail Inayatullah, introducing six basic and foundational concepts of futures thinking: the used future; the disowned future; the alternative future; alignment; models of social change; and use of the future.
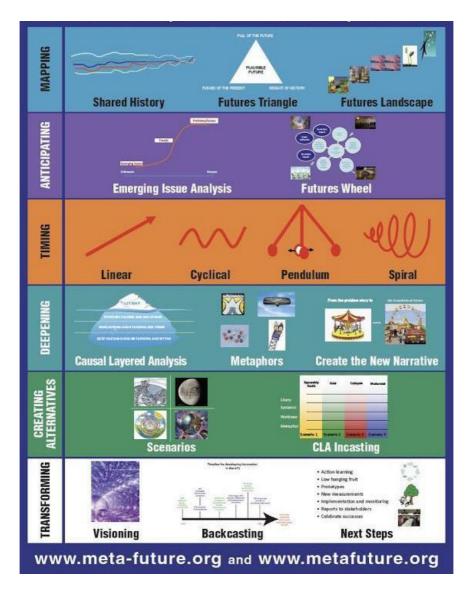

Fig. 2: Six pillars approach. Source: www.meta-future.org

In the following interview, Mr. Logtens answers to these questions provide not just a thought-provoking point of view about the future of NETE but also his perception about the future of humankind. In his answer to the question "what future are you afraid of?" he provides foresight to see beyond the present.

Interview

Interviewee: Mr. Eric Logtens, CEO of Noble Environmental Technologies Europe.

Interviewer: Ricardo Weigend, PhD Student, Edinburgh Napier University.

Ricardo Weigend: Mr. Eric Logtens, thank you for giving me this opportunity to interview you.

Ricardo Weigend: What do you think the future will be like? What is your prediction of the future?

Eric Logtens: Basically, the way people look at the future is that they perceive it as an iterative improvement of what we can achieve on wealth, health, technological advancement, thinking and so on. That is because they are looking at what is happening through the lens of the industrial revolution. So we have a lot of conversations about the 2nd, 3rd or 4th industrial revolution, but an iterative process of advancements has nothing to do with real innovation. A real new future. That lens is wrong. The lens we should look through is to analyse what happened in the early 90s of the former century and what were the paradigms at that moment in time on human migration, health, medicine, communication, religion, earth resources from a climate perspective but also from a materials perspective. And when we then take a comparable phase of human history, we can also go back to the era between 1450 and 1550, a moment in time where hundreds of years later people still talk about the fact that humankind took a giant leap forward. That was the Renaissance. We are not living in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th industrial revolution. Since the end of the 1990's we have been living in the Second Renaissance. This means that in this present era, humankind will again take a giant leap on all kinds of fields: religion, migration, information, technology and awareness. Read *Age of Discovery* (Fig. 3, a) by Ian Goldin and Chris Kutarna (2017), it is amazing. This research inspired me most since reading McDonough and Braungart's (2010) first book, *Cradle to Cradle* (Fig. 3, b).
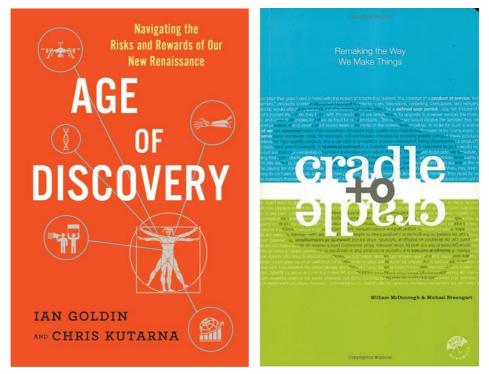

Fig. 3: (a) Age of discovery book cover, (b) Cradle to cradle book cover

Ultimately, us included, you see there are a lot of new agents for change amongst people right now. So, for example, a decade ago we started to talk about climate *change*. Then in 2019 you hear a new term popping up: climate *crisis*. Whereas *change* is something we can control and resist because we love to be doing what we always did; crisis is different, crisis is a call to action. Now, when the ones who create the most negative climate impact on our planet are the ones who are living the furthest away from experiencing the effects of climate change, say like people in Europe, and contrast it to the people in the Seychelles (where in those parts of the world the effects of climate change are already being experienced), crisis leads to fear. We are now tapping into the two primal motivators of mankind: fear and greed. When we first go into fear, we will be paralysed as a group, which won't save us. Ultimately, we will respond instinctively with creativity to get out of the crisis. So that what we will find in the next coming decades is positivity. We have a lot of technical solutions already in order, but the sense of urgency has yet to be experienced by all; once the global population goes into crisis mode, creativity and togetherness will prevail. Let us not call everything innovation when it is just an iterative improvement. We will have two big tickets: Artificial Intelligence and Circular Economy; these are the two big tickets for the next two decades.

Ricardo Weigend: When you say tickets, what do you mean?

Eric Logtens: Artificial Intelligence and Circular Economy will define how the world looks like 50 years from now, everything else is not relevant. So, energy is already a past discussion. Technology is here and humankind is simply struggling with what to do with it. Instead of trying to preserve old capital on oil and gas installations, a climate crisis mode will lead us to pragmatic actions.

Ricardo Weigend: So would you define your future as an optimistic one rather than a pessimistic one?

Eric Logtens: Ok, let me dig into that. Basically, what we have seen when we analyse what drives people to perform and grow above and beyond themselves are the same motivators that have been there always, especially since WWII; they are based on owning stuff that is economic and easily available. But we lost ourselves on what brings true prosperity because when you ask someone "What is most precious to you?", almost everyone says health. When we then analyse what do people invest in and what are they willing to pay for, health is at the lower bottom of the list. So, in the future we will have a different perspective of what prosperity for everyone and for everything will be. We will start measuring our added value in how much happiness we bring, how much health we create. Also, we will be seeking for simplicity. For the last sixty, seventy years, everything has been driven by complexity. Complexity of materials, complexity of organisational structure, complexity in economic systems, financial products, etc. We will pursue simplicity, transparency, health and honesty. People do not want to be bamboozled anymore. So ownership will become much less of a motivator. We will want to have mobility, no longer a big impressive Aston Martin in front of our porch to show off against the neighbours.

Ricardo Weigend: Ok, I understand, so you are reframing or disrupting the concept of progress and wealth, basically.

Eric Logtens: Yes, first of all we have already derived from these old institutions. The money that presently exists in the world is less than 20% real money, the rest is zeros and ones; it only exists digitally. The value we place on our currency is completely disconnected from reality; its purchasing power is diminishing by the day, and when you look at how people pride themselves on accessing music by a platform like Spotify, for example, or accessing the technology for getting themselves from A to B by an Uber, or accessing the availability of space, comfort and sharing at an Airbnb, we notice that these are the disruptive innovators; and they never came out of the industry they originated from. The guys from Airbnb were not from Hilton Garden Inn, the guys from Uber were not taxi drivers. So, I see the future as extremely bright because that mental shift is already happening and will continue. What frightens me is that we will start using 20% more of our brains because we are going to implement chips enabling us to do so. What will we do when we get access to that unimaginable brain capacity? For the first time ever, mankind will exceed the use of its brain, like the dolphins have already done for thousands of years. Will we use our mental capabilities for our emotional wellbeing, for our human interactions, to help each other, or will we

use it to win the next deal by outsmarting others and use it for our own material gains?

   As Harari wrote, homo sapiens as a species didn't have the time to adapt to a new future as their brain power increased tremendously. The exponential growth of our capacity for learning, thinking and abstraction has not been incorporated into how we work in groups using social intelligence. For example, Mexicans have been looking up to the United States, especially in the last 75 years. What has that brought them? A higher rate of death than in the U.S. due to obesity, based on a Coca-Cola and McDonald's diet. There is a lack of social intelligence to adapt to the new level of so-called wealth (for the happy few).

Ricardo Weigend: There is a concept called Used Futures and it basically illustrates the example you just gave between the United States and Mexico, but in Inayatullah (2008) he describes how Asian cities, particularly in Japan, started to copy the way cities were built in the United States. In terms of ECOR as an organisation, what aspects can you mention about what you have explained at an individual level; what do you think the future will be like in terms of ECOR. Can you elaborate a little bit on how you see the future of ECOR, and also what you think the future will be like.

Eric Logtens: On Japanese cities being built based on the learnings and the infrastructures in the United States, it happened in a very short and compressed era in time. In comparison, when we look at European and Far East (including Japanese) relationships, migrations of people, trade, freight, and more, they have been going on for thousands of years. The United States has had its moment in time for only 70 years. So the only thing that can be said is that it is deriving back to where we came from. We were misled by the concept of the American dream: focused on economic and financial gains, to own as much as possible, to consume as much as possible; that system has failed. So, when the United States was building infrastructure, freedom of speech, and so on, it was something big to behold and parts of the world looked up to. But we also have already seen its fall, the decay, and the end of the game in only 80 years. So the rise and the fall of the United States' mentality, culture, political system, economic system, has only lasted 70 years, where it took Rome 200 years to only *fall* as an empire. You are asking what the future of ECOR is, where to go from here. It is towards the East, because that's where for thousands of years the real old roots are to be found; that's where entanglement lies, we simply forgot about it for a few decades.

Ricardo Weigend: Can you be more specific?

Eric Logtens: The United States and Latin America are not so relevant for the next foreseeable decades. When you analyse where the real deal is happening, it is in the Far East. There you find: A) a completely different sense of urgency. B) extremely fit young talent. C) some really frightening governmental infrastructures which can also really enforce change overnight. New Deli, for example, 25 million people on the 1st of October 2018, from one day to the next, eliminated single-use plastic bags, period. In the Netherlands they would need to discuss that for over a decade and would politicise it to death instead of simply taking a pragmatic decision and action. When we look at global GDP in Europe, it is like an "evening country". But still European GDP combined with Japan's GDP is 40% of the global GDP; when these two powers connect together we get a true force. There's the old saying, when two dogs fight over a bone the third one will walk away with it. Let China and the U.S do what they are supposed to do in this era because it is written in their time now; but the one benefitting (walking away with the bone) will be Asia, not China. What other Asian countries are trying to figure out is what is the best of both worlds from the United States and China. They will be able to leapfrog the mistakes those economies have made and the struggles they encountered. For example, skip not having to build the old infrastructures of energy into every home; imagine a village on a small island, where no one has ever had electricity in their home. They don't know what it truly means to have it. It would cost trillions to build an infrastructure like what we have in the US or in Europe. Now imagine simply putting a solar panel on the rooftop of every home and a windmill next to the village. They can leapfrog the last 80 years completely.

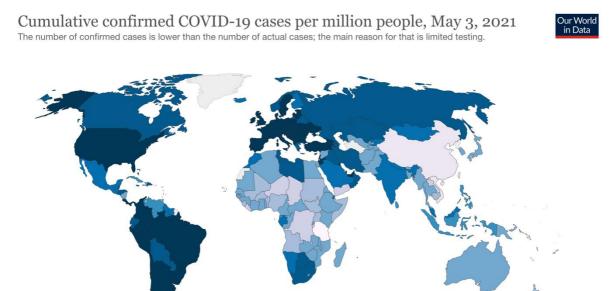**Ricardo Weigend**: So then can we say that NETE/ECOR owns its future?

Eric Logtens: You are asking the CEO of NETE. Well, when you decide that you're going to create your own blue

ocean, you develop a strategy, which by definition for a roll out has the one standing consistent factor which is that you enable co-creation, co-operation, taking shared responsibility and building communities with unprecedented Circular Economy eco-systems. You do not know the stakeholders when you start, you accept uncertainty about where you are going to start and you do not know who will start when. Then, by definition, your organisational structure and the move into the market is defined as you go, building an "Emerging Team" for the planting and the seeding phase. The essence of an emerging team is that it will grow internally: developing, shaping, and organising itself in a manner which is adaptive to the regions it serves and to other stakeholders to be found throughout the world. Then, in a later stage when, for example, you build a factory and you need a more hierarchical system of structure, or a more "closed" system or structure, a new form will emerge out of the function to perform in its phase and time. That's why the mindset should be from the structure of what we're doing. It's about entanglement, not connection; entanglement is about delivery, delivering of results.

Fig. 4: ECOR logo and tagline

Ricardo Weigend: The second question is which future are you afraid of?

Eric Logtens: Fear is not in my DNA, so if the current status quo would lead to losing 80% of the global population then that's simply a matter of something which has to happen. So for me the whole future question from a sustainability or climate perspective, is not so much if the world will come to an end but if homo sapiens will maintain their license for existence. For example, 30 years ago in Chernobyl, when you had the biggest nuclear disaster ever, fear led to non-communication because of political rivalries. By pure luck the fallout of the nuclear explosion was blown away by the direction of the wind; that the European population survived was nothing but luck. Just because of the weather conditions and the direction of the wind. 30 years later, you can see down the road flora and fauna are back. The only species which still can't survive is mankind; it cannot adapt. That's an interesting fact. For mankind, I only fear the little things that will ultimately kill us: bacteria and viruses. Normally, that's a very natural way of cleaning up. It is the only thing I can come up that I fear, but I'm a basic optimist.

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people, May 3, 2021
The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

No data   0   10   100   500   1,000   5,000   10,000 20,000 40,000 >80,000

Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data   CC BY

Fig. 5: COVID-19 is the fastest-growing global pandemic in human history

Source: https://ourworldindata.org/covid-cases

Ricardo Weigend: Third question is are there certain assumptions or paradigms that you think may be challenged by someone from other regions or from other gender. So let's touch the gender part, is your assumption maybe not taking a more balanced gender-wise future?

Eric Logtens: The discussion about gender will be obsolete. Ultimately, it'll be very simple. It will come and very soon, we have seen some attempts already. The impact will be on fertility, lowering the fertility rate will also solve that challenge.

So, after every war in every region of the world, wherever it happened, statistically, in every single place in the world, where there was a war, after a war, more boys were born than girls, always. That's the human unconscious, the natural correction for human survival when there is an impact so terrible as casualties of war. So we can talk about genetics and DNA anytime but it's something our species is making the correction on losing, percentage wise. That's nature. The challenge we have right now is that we talk about nature as if it is something else than ourselves. So, nature is this, climate is this, environment is this, but we *are* nature.

Our terrible presumptuousness is so high that we assume in our mindset that we are not part of nature, that we can shape it anyway we want. Nature will correct us, not the other way around.

Ricardo Weigend: The fourth question is: What are some alternatives to that future? Would you change some of these assumptions? What alternatives emerge?

Eric Logtens: In our different political and societal systems, we have devalued something which is not true to our species and nature; it is called civilization. When you look at civilizations, like Scandinavia, they are extreme about quality and access to healthcare for all. When you look at our ideology of what "just and unjust" is, when you look

at our definition of what "wealth" is, then the biggest threat and the biggest challenge in what I see for our future is the impact of inequality. Inequality in access to natural resources, water, food. Inequality in economic wealth when 0.001% of the global population possess more than 80% of the global population's wealth. Inequality is a basic driver, motivator for mankind to move into action. When we are no longer capable of handling inequality, we've got only two options. First option: the ones who feel left out, left behind will go into revolution mode and will ultimately conquer. Second option: the speed of wealth consolidation by the happy few (the 0.001%) will accelerate to a level which is so high that the distance between these two groups can no longer be overcome. Then you will have a specific small part of our species exploiting by far the largest part of our species as if they were lettuce in the field or chickens (handling humans as we handle our chickens these days). That's the biggest risk. Where I come from, it's about prosperity for everyone and everything, and that's what I strive for. But we are moving into a situation where we will have to make those choices, I'm afraid.

Ricardo Weigend: Any other alternative that occurs to you?

Eric Logtens: Yeah, let's find ourselves an alternative planet where we will take the lessons learned from how we fucked up this planet; that might provide us a license to exist as a species. But that's not the future I'm going to experience anymore, so "we" refers to people who are over 20 or 30 years old, it's their field of action I am talking about here.

Ricardo Weigend: There are some futures that are described as wildcards. So can you see something totally unpredictable happening?

Eric Logtens: I can think of a wild card: a meteorite hitting the earth. Yeah, that's a wild card definitely. Yeah. When a volcano is going to erupt, that's predictable, it's plannable. You just don't know when it's going to happen; it can span from a day to thousands of years from now, so you are planning for it to happen, to clean up the mess. When a meteorite hits, that's external.

Ricardo Weigend: This really doesn't make for a new scenario. It's just about your actions, to move on and then continue with that future, right?

Eric Logtens: Yeah. Probably with a little bit of less people and animals. But, you know, awareness as such is a very big challenge for everyone. Basically every day you look in the mirror, every day your hair grows. But there comes a specific day where you say, hey! Now I have to get myself a haircut. In that moment you became aware that your hair grows, you just didn't give it a thought during the whole process of 6 or 8 weeks. So when you looked at recent news here in the Netherlands, something passed you by yesterday: that in all of Europe, almost 50% of all wild animals are threatened by extinction. It has been going on for more than 500 years, and we've accelerated it tremendously, say in the last 150 years, but all these years, all these months, all these days, in the same analogy as your hair growing, those species have been slowly decimated Only when you can't find a lynx anymore, anywhere in Europe, then you become aware of the fact. Hey! Where are all those millions of lynxes! And only when a wolf comes back to the Netherlands, you suddenly say, Hey! we've got a wolf in the Netherlands! So your awareness and the perception through the lens you use to look at our world is of the essence, before we move into action.

Ricardo Weigend: So, the future that you have described in the first question, what direction and steps should ECOR take to move into that preferred future?

Eric Logtens: Yeah, the right direction is different for everyone, and will be experienced at different times in an orderly manner. Right now ECOR is in the start-up to scale-up phase; we've been challenged by the outside world on the time it has taken and the money it has cost in order to get to the phase where we are today. Outsiders will say too much money, too many years, but what we are doing right now is grabbing the learning curve from different regions in the world and analysing it from an innovative, catalysing, capitalising perspective, and what might seem as random to the outside world is actually truly, completely strategically orchestrated.

   Japan is about proving speed. After only 7 months, when the paradigm was "it takes seven years to do business

in the Japanese culture", we signed a memorandum of understanding. In Singapore we are about proving the concept of leapfrogging out of one early adaptive agile region. India is where we're going to grab the learning curve through social impact and environmental impact. In Northwest Europe we grabbed the learning curve of being capable of manufacturing in a high-cost labour environment, successfully providing a competitive product against the long rooted and institutionalised industries who have dominated for more than 40 years. With the company Concourse we're going to prove that true growth is to be captured on the eight continent: airports. In Mexico, we're going to prove and grab the learning curve of "Absolute Massive", meaning low prices, one application, one waste stream and tremendous masses of celluloses to be converted.

With knowledge from these different learnings we will be implementing them in other situations, adopting, adapting, etc. After time and repetition, the "cookie cutting" principle can be applied in different regions of the world. The cookie cutting principle arises from finding and learning what works best and organising yourself around that; that's how you build your ecosystem and create your meaningful difference: the purpose-driven impact. From there on, we will not have control; I mean, we will have no control of its growth whatsoever, because what we have created is something which will promote itself. It's like something going viral on the internet. It will start living a life of its own and the only thing we will have to do is monitor and control its integrity, so that the values and ambitions we set out to achieve at the start of this project are kept upright. It will also have a high economic impact according to old world standards. That's perfectly fine, but that's not the ultimate goal. At this point, what we do with our team is to make ourselves completely irrelevant. It will outgrow us. If it doesn't, we will stay a nice little company with a nice little technology which will create its own competition, and within three to four years from now, we'll be operating in the margins of society. So, ECOR everywhere implies that a trojan horse drove into this company and that you will not be ECOR yourself anymore. When it is everywhere it is actually also from everyone, which is absolutely fine.

Earlier on, we were talking about behavioural change, that people have to take up the intention to want to change. How you initiate that intention with an individual or a group of people is the trick. When people think they came up with something themselves it is a 1000 times more embedded, stronger and likely to really initiate the desired change, then when you try to convince someone in endless meetings, exchanging arguments, which ultimately lead to nothing else than vibrating air. I really enjoy observing when people are switching gears, going left or right in the absolute conviction that it was their own rational ideas which led them to their own conclusions.

Ricardo Weigend: I think I didn't get it. Which observation do you enjoy most?

Eric Logtens: That's easy, I like to see when everyone in the team is completely committed and dedicated to making themselves obsolete at the end of a project which leads to something so strong that it grows on its own. It's fantastic working towards a future which doesn't need your competencies and skills anymore once the job is done. Everyone sees themselves as co-creators at the starting point. Imagine yourself planting a young small tree. You need to water and nourish it, keep it safe in the first years. But it will be there way, way longer than you will live. It will outgrow and outlast you for sure. Already when planting the first small seed, defined by your perception, you think that you are growing your tree in your own garden. You are not, for it is another tree in the world. What you think you own and pride yourself with is irrelevant in time and to the bigger scheme of life.

Ricardo Weigend: So there's a concept of alignment. We need to align our day to day problems, based on our approach to the strategy, and we need to align a strategy with the broader big picture and the big picture with our vision, and the vision with our day to day.

Eric Logtens: If there were to be total alignment, we would know what we are doing, why we are doing it and therefore we would get what we already have. The best and most creative ideas, out of the box solutions, arise from frustration. So, I am cultivating frustration to enable ourselves to grab the different learning curves. Where I have to tamper it, is when frustration grows into despair. So when a colleague is on the verge of freaking out because he or she doesn't know anymore, that's when I have to tamper it. Pull the break. But to have total alignment right now in this phase of our trajectory would be the stupidest thing to do. It would kill the intrinsic energy and force of the team. You cannot say this to the team, because once they know, they would see me coming and then they would

take action based on what they anticipate. Therefore my experiment with building a team would fail.

On the other hand, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't organise ourselves around our current situation using the protocols on how we work with each other, applying the five "W" principles (why, what, who, when, where). But this team has been very specifically chosen on its multiformity, education wise, culturally wise and experience wise. Right now we've got one of each for everything. This is the minimal state, though for a scale-up it is quite big in the number of people present. Imagine placing an autistic, process and protocol-driven individual in the same team with someone who has a butterfly mind, who is solely driven by what he/she feels and senses. They will never be completely aligned about how to deliver on a specific task at hand. But what comes out of the two perspectives, characters, knowledge and experience combined is of extreme importance. That is 1+1 = 5. Now, calculate what the impact is when you combine 20 different archetypes on that one single task. That's where exponential growth comes to life. That's what we are doing. But this is all a dance on very thin ice because most of the time, when you put ten people in the room and you discuss something and you come to a conclusion and you then commit and then you summarize what the conclusion was and then you put that in writing, the general perception amongst these people is that they are all thinking the same. That's what you have learned on how to approach and organise a meeting. But the perception of alignment is always different from everyone else. We think we do align but we actually don't. So even on a definition, which is written in a contract, your interpretation of that definition will always be different from others reading that exact same contract.

So "alignment" as a concept is something human beings seek in order to find common ground such as shared goals and ambitions. But the beauty is that because every individual is unique, that one definition, that one action point written down and agreed upon by 10 people, will have a tremendous amount of different perceptions and interpretations which are then advocated, explained and sold in hundreds of other meetings with hundreds of other people, which, in turn will start leading lives of their own. Thus, these perceptions create "ECOR Everywhere" and so, a) I am not striving for alignment, and b) I don't undermine this process in the team. This amorphous type of group of individuals can achieve goals they cannot conceptualise themselves just by being who they are. That's exactly the reason why I'm always saying that it is humbling for me to lead this team. From a group perspective and all the earlier mentioned topics this is the most fantastic group or team I've ever built.

Ricardo Weigend: So we were talking about alignment as an organisation. There is also inner alignment. Often an organisation or individual has a particular strategy of the future. To achieve a certain goal, but its inner map does not reflect this strategy. The inner map may even be in direct contradiction to its external reality. The challenge is then, first to discern the inner map, and then to detect how the organisation sees itself.

Eric Logtens: I can tell you about my perception of a session that we did before we kick started this project. At the time Gerrit Bruggeman was my coach, me and I think Jay Potter was involved as well. So I'm approaching this now from the perspective on how you build a brand. So I'm going back to the days where perhaps five people in Europe had ever heard about ECOR, not the hundreds of thousands we've got today. A couple of things, which are still present and there for you today, ECOR's acronym stands for Enabling co-Creation, co-Operation and taking shared Responsibility; if you look at it from a brand building perspective, ECOR actually has a brand personality. Our brand personality is The Magician. Then, our brand colour is purple. Purple comes from spiral dynamics. So these days you get a lot of people talking about "he is all blue, she is all red…" and then we stigmatise. Spiral dynamics is like the original "Bible" for archetypes of individuals (Fig. 6), you can check that up. The colour of ECOR´s personality is purple just like a magician, that's why he comes with the acronym of an ELF (ECOR the Living Factory).

Then it's about developing the brand promise. What do you stand for? The brand promise is what you will call in the old world a mission statement and a vision. So promise personality and then the delivery part. Let me give you an example. When you are a magician as a personality, and you have a factory which is rigid in how it approaches new challenges you build the wrong closed-system organisation (team). That's how things end up. There is literature on this within ECOR, I think that it's best that you read it.

Fig. 6: Carl Gustav Jung. Twelve archetypes

Source:https://medium.com/@aliciahurtado/qu%C3%A9-son-los-arquetipos-35aa9f3b9d5b

Ricardo Weigend: Where does the element of Circular Economy come in all of this? Can you elaborate a bit more on the principles of CE and how they are being manifested in ECOR.

Eric Logtens: CE's principles (from the example by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation) and the Cradle to Cradle concept in ECOR, are embedded in the core of the technology as such. We eliminated the concept of the perception that there is a "life cycle" of a product. We are now talking about user cycles and we are talking about abundance and diversity. The CE as such is focusing way too much, in my opinion, on the economic part of the matter. It leaves behind the ecological impact and the equity concerns of Braungart and McDonough's developed "triangle". Think of social fairness, male-female equality. The CE as a concept is a tool, it is not the goal. The essence is that in the complexity of the world we all live in, no one and nothing, like in nature, can do anything alone. We have to redefine our relationships according to the CE principles.
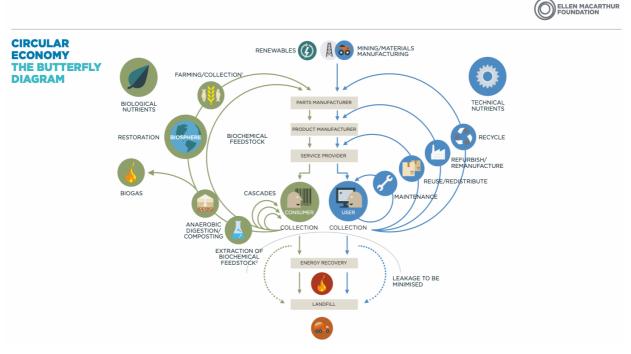
Fig. 7: Circular Economy Butterfly diagram

Source: https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/explore/the-circular-economy-in-detail

Say for example, procurement versus sales or secrecy versus transparency. What keeps on surprising me is that everyone still continues to talk about "the concept" of CE. A couple of months ago I was giving a lecture at an event which had the title "The transition towards circularity" Ok?! You cannot transition yourself towards something. You are already in the middle of a transition. And if it is driven by material scarcity or it is driven by economic impact, or driven by adding value, or recovering or recycling, or whatever, you are one of the early adopters of the ReSOLVE framework (Fig. 8). You are already in it. So the CE is not an innovation, it is an iterative process of improvement. Because it is happening during this second Renaissance, its acceleration is tremendously faster when you look at it from the perspective of what has happened or dramatically changed in the last few hundreds of years. CE is embedded in how we think, what we do, how we act, where we are, why we are doing what we are doing, who is doing what; it's already affecting us.

CE has been around for ages, think of how farms were organised 60 years ago, they were circular. We simply are starting to look at it from a different perspective. Look at it the other way around, put it in a different mindset. For example: We've never been so *uncircular in* the last 60 years of our species existence. For a very short period of time in our existence we have forgotten how the world really works; we are now going back to where we came from, but at a tremendously higher state of awareness from the perspective of wealth, science, social organisation, communication, health, etc. than in the millennia before.

Fig. 8: Circular Economy ReSOLVE framework (2015)

Source: https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/publications/EllenMacArthurFoundation_Growth-Within_July15.pdf

Ricardo Weigend: We have covered all the questions. Thank you for your answers Mr. Logtens, and for all your insights.

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