

Marketing and the quest for good

Graeme Murray, 23 May 2025

When it comes
to marketing the
only constant is
change.



We've
witnessed the
rise and
dominance of
the digital age.



The internet,
social media
and big tech
have changed
the face of
marketing.



Digital
platforms
promise brands
huge audiences
and the ability
for precise
targeting.



Advertising has
evolved into
content and
influencer
marketing.



Battle
between
traditional
brand building
and
performance
marketing.

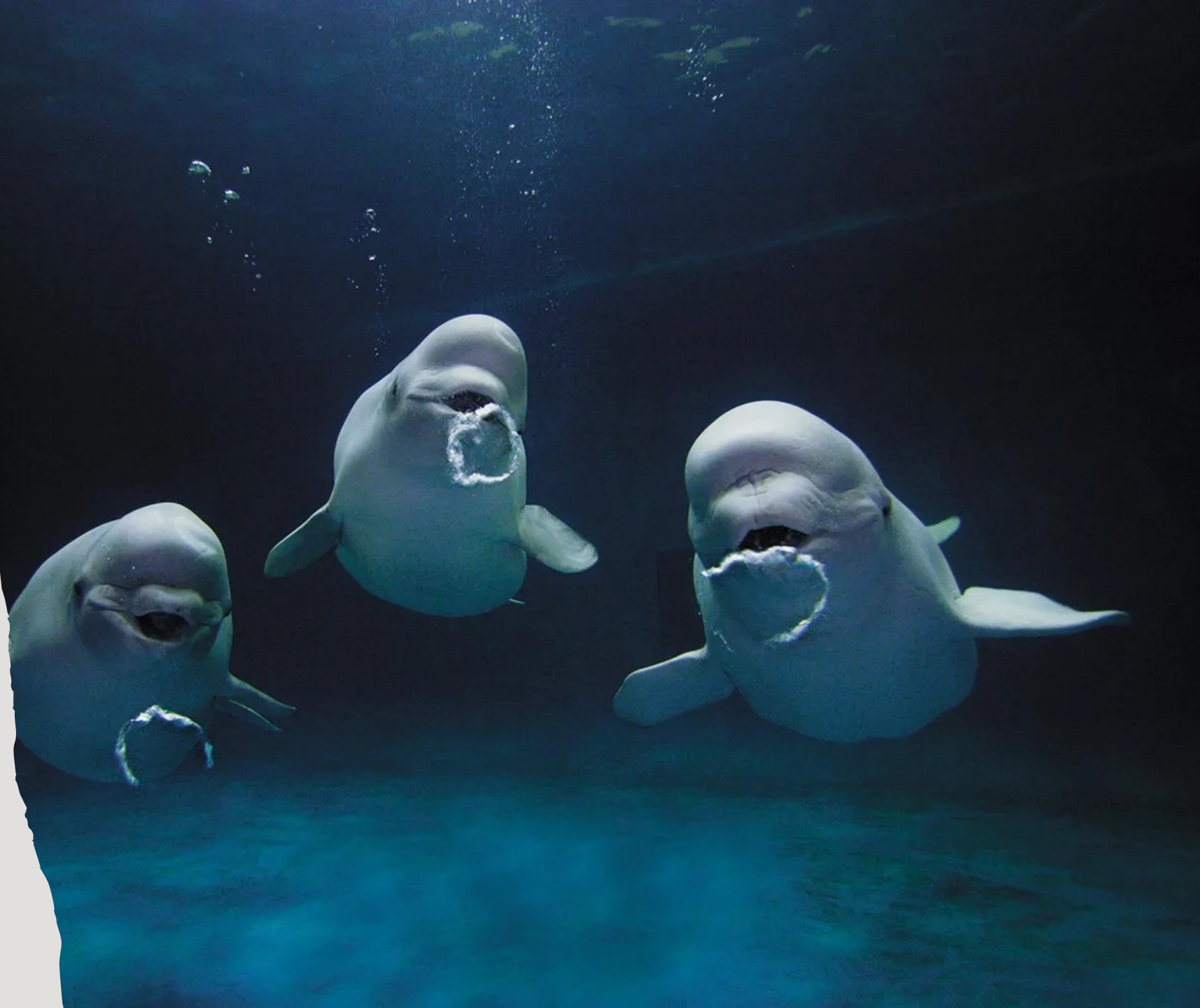


We live in the
currency of
clicks, views
and likes.

Attention is
everything.



With algorithms
flattening our
culture, shaping
content and
putting us in
different
bubbles.



Witnessing an
AI arms race –
with many of us
either seduced
or petrified
about its
implications



Despite all this
change, **one
thing** has stayed
very much the
same...



We still rely on
the **4Ps** of
marketing
invented by
Jerome McCarthy
back in 1960.



McCarthy's
doctrine was
simple:

*“all company
activities should
be directed to
satisfying the
consumer at a
profit.”*



Marketing
became a
driving force of
consumption:

**deepening and
diversifying the
needs and wants
of consumers that
could only be met
through personal
consumption**



We've reached
new heights
with online
brands
promoting fast
fashion and
non-stop
consumerism.



We've become
dopamine-
obsessed in the
process:

**overabundance
keeps us craving
more.**




65 years on and
our behaviours
are having
unprecedented
impacts on
nature...

Total global polar bear population: approx. 26,000

Classified as a vulnerable species, primarily due to the threat of sea ice loss caused by climate change.

(source: International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN, 2025)

Below the sea...



37% of the world's sharks and rays, 33% of reef corals, 26% of mammals (including marine) and 21% of reptiles are threatened with extinction.

(source: International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN, 2024)

On the natural
environment...

During 2021-2025, the Amazon may have lost up to 23.7 million hectares of forest, an area almost as large as the entire United Kingdom.

(source: the Amazon Network of Georeferenced Socio-Environmental Information - RAISG, 2023)



And to
ourselves.

In 2022, 1 in 8 people in the world were living with obesity.

Worldwide adult obesity has more than doubled since 1990.

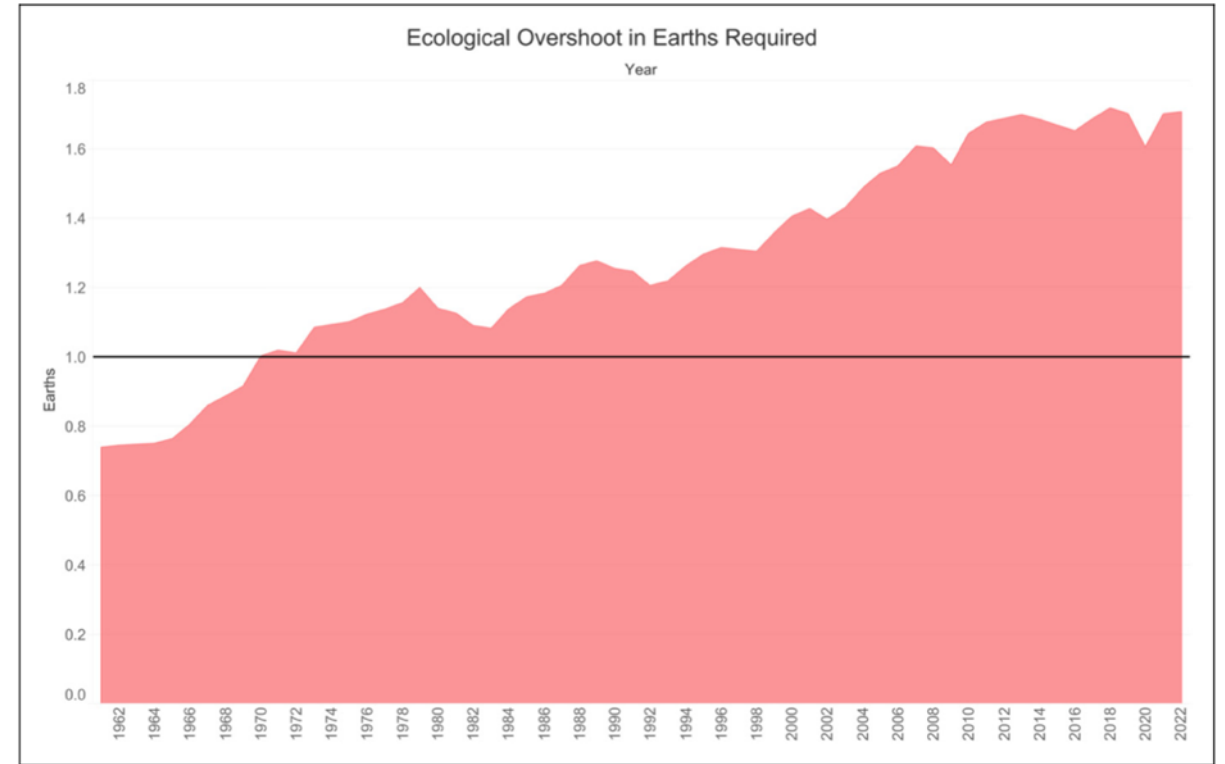
And adolescent obesity has quadrupled.

(source: World Health Organization 2025)

These
behaviours
are highly
maladaptive for
humanity.



We use as many
ecological resources
as if we lived on
1.71 Earths.



(source: Global Footprint Network – June 2023)



We are rapidly approaching numerous climate tipping points that may alter our Earth's system.

“Humans have become increasingly separate from the rest of life on Earth.”

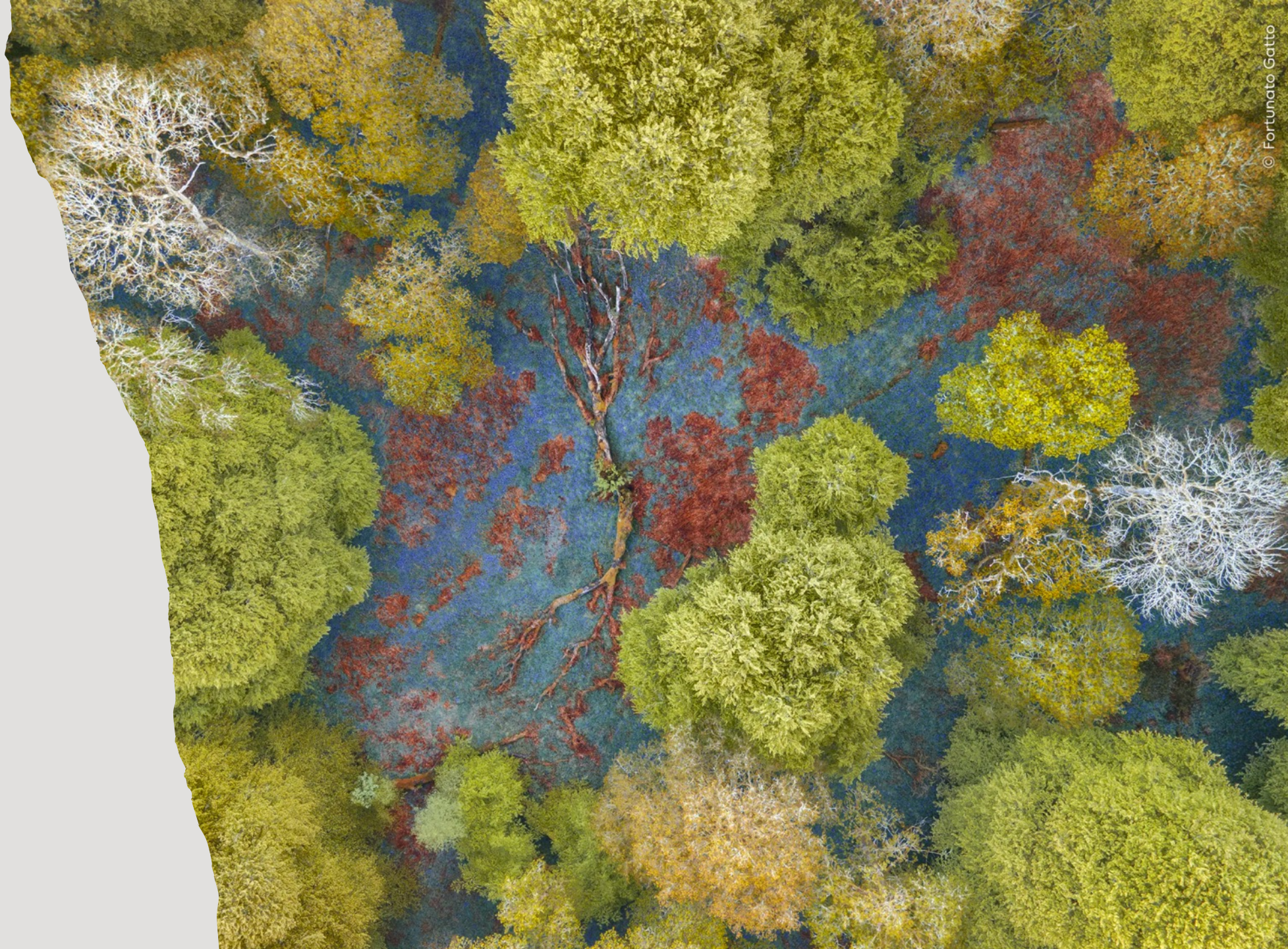
Sir David
Attenborough





Nature is our home and life support system.

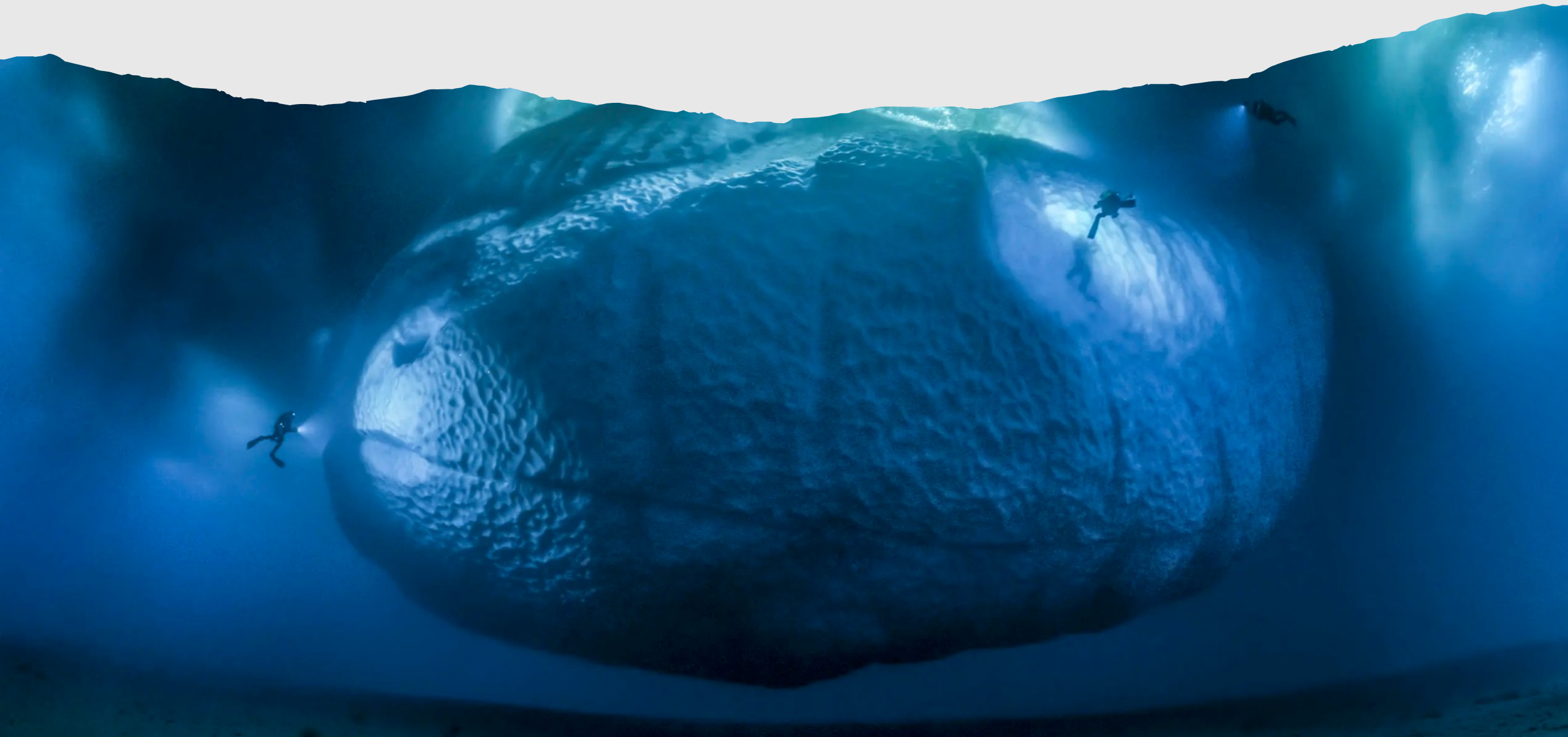
Natural
ecosystems
regulate our
environment.



The economy is
a wholly owned
subsidiary of
nature, not the
other way around.



We are an indivisible part of nature.



Destroy nature



and we destroy
ourselves.



We have a lot to
learn from nature.



Nature is circular.



Nature generates
no waste.



Nature is
regenerative.



Nature is built
on resource
efficiency,
collaboration
and symbiosis.



Nature
constantly adapts
to changing
conditions and
environments.



It's time to
unshackle from
the old ways of
doing business.



*From chasing
non-stop
growth and
driving
consumption.*



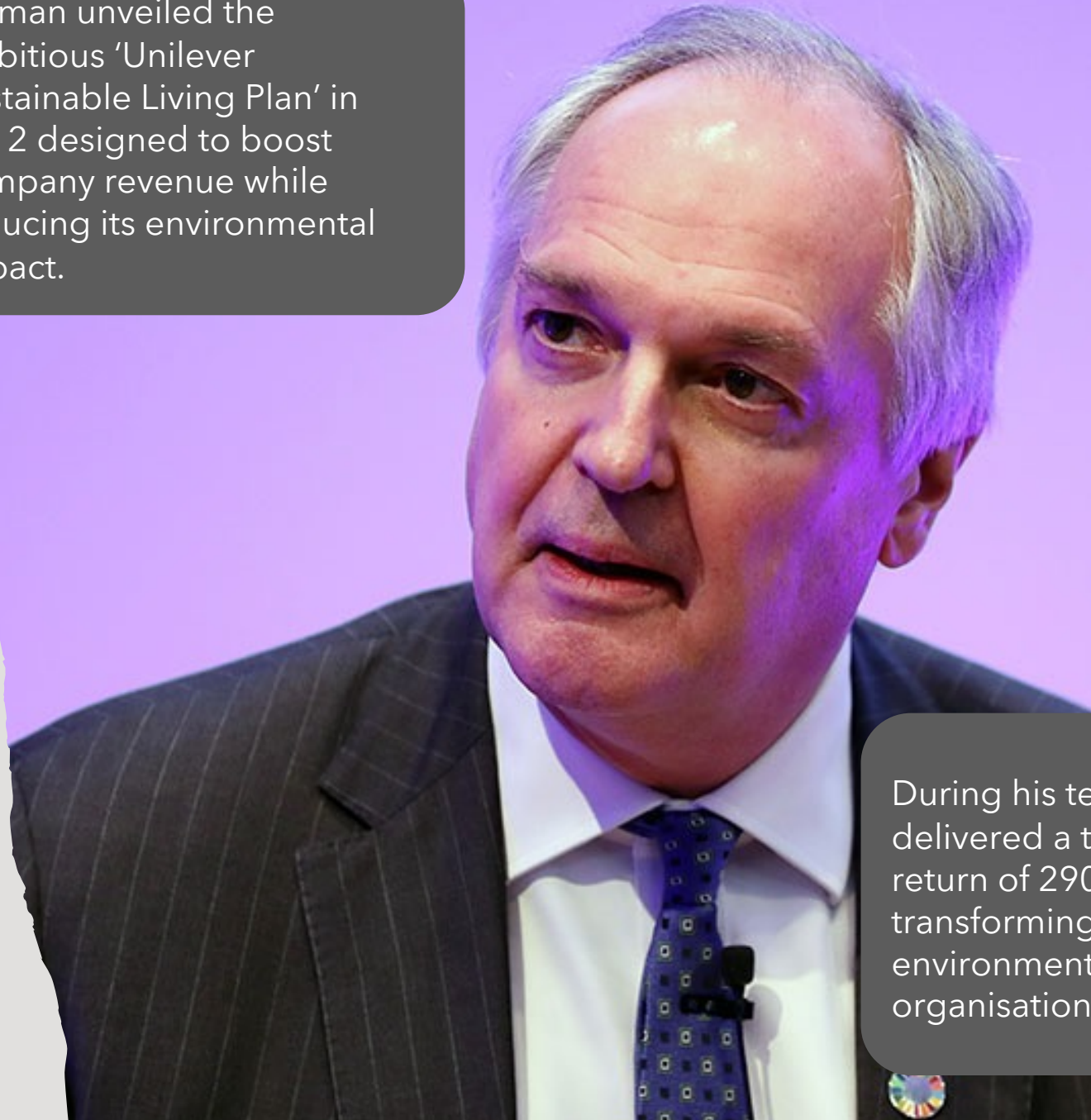
*To becoming
regenerative,
restorative and
reparative.*



“The role of business, first and foremost, is to make a positive contribution to society; otherwise it has no reason to exist.”

Paul Polman, ex-CEO Unilever, 2009-2019

Polman unveiled the ambitious 'Unilever Sustainable Living Plan' in 2012 designed to boost company revenue while reducing its environmental impact.



During his tenure, he delivered a total shareholder return of 290 percent, transforming Unilever into an environmentally conscious organisation.



#ArabSpring (2010-2012)




#MeToo (2018)



#BlackLivesMatter (2020)

People are demanding change.

Global citizens are concerned about the future.

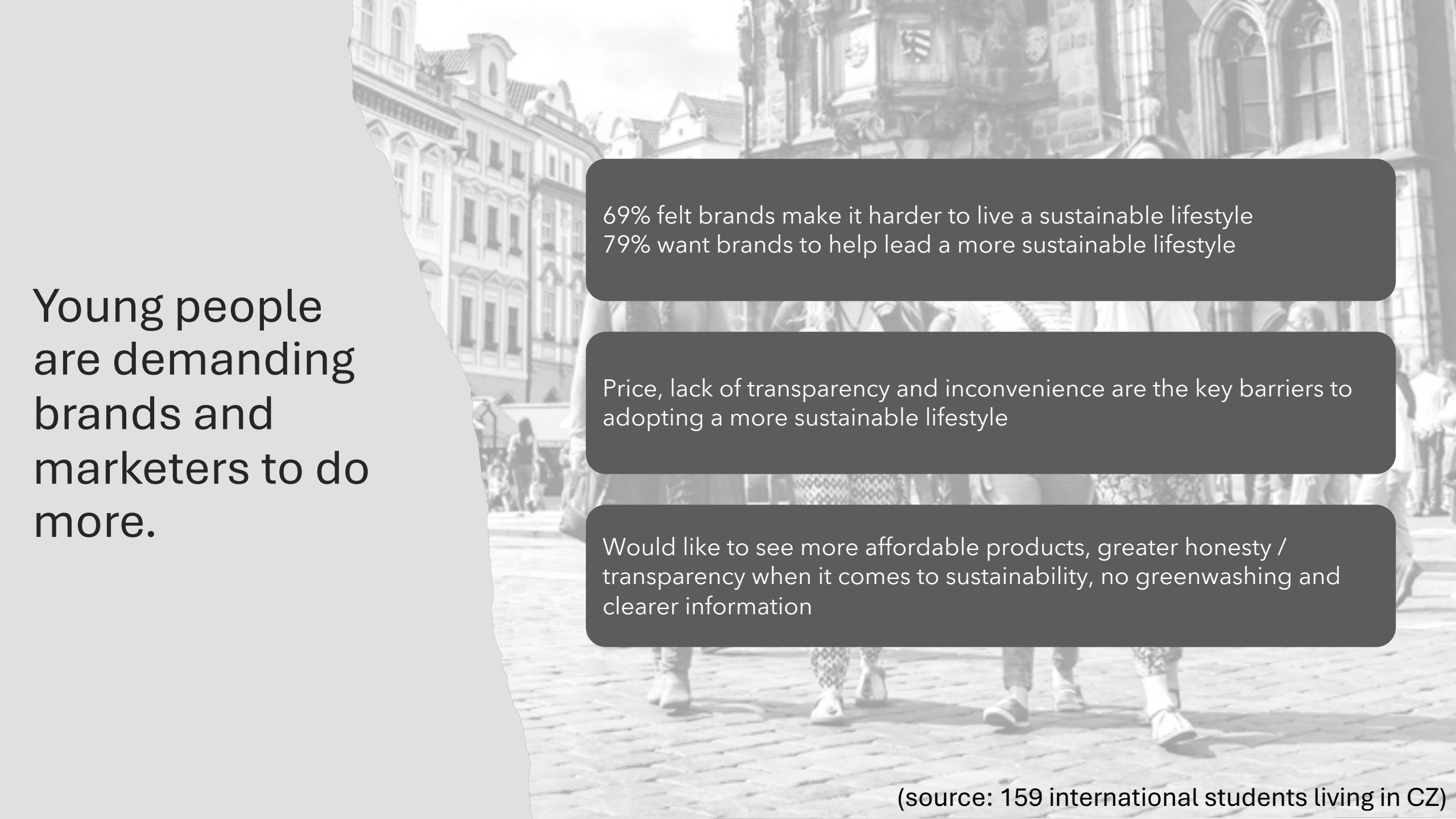


We are
witnessing
shifts and
changes in
consumer
behaviour.

To reduce their impact on the environment, 73% of consumers say they would change their consumer decisions and habits (source: NielsenIQ, 2019)

54% of Generation Z and 50% of millennials are willing to spend 10% or more on sustainable products, compared to 34% of Gen X and 23% of baby boomer (source: First Insight 2019)

45% of Gen Z consumers in the UK (people born between 1997 and 2012) have stopped purchasing certain brands because of ethical or sustainability concerns (source: Deloitte 2022)



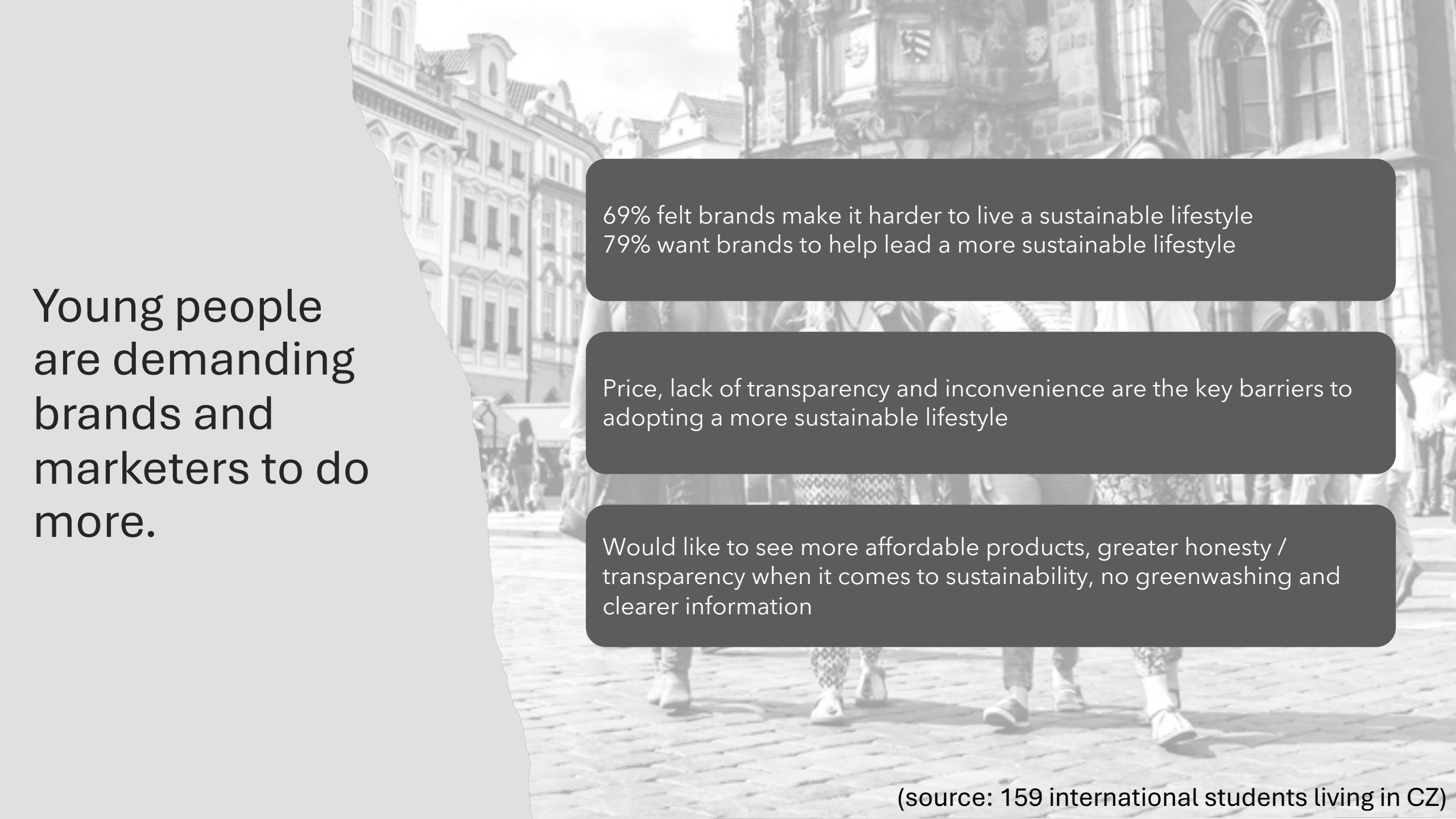
Young people
are demanding
brands and
marketers to do
more.

95% acknowledge that people buy more than they need
75% are trying to live sustainably

20% doubt the individual positive impact on society
46% are not swayed by brands regarding their sustainability practices

52% felt that brands don't care about sustainability
54% were unsatisfied with the positive change brands are making

(source: 159 international students living in CZ)



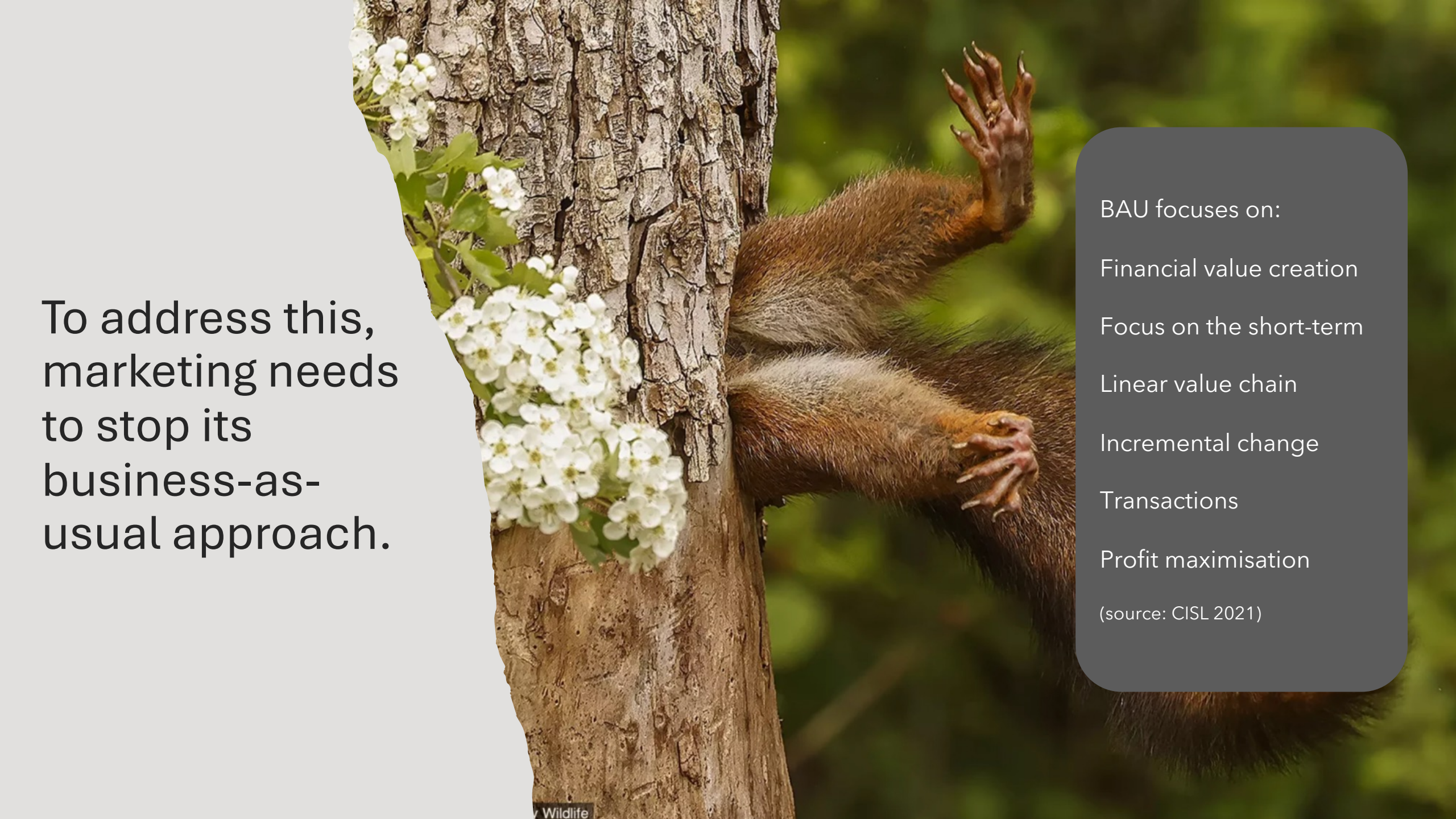
Young people
are demanding
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marketers to do
more.

69% felt brands make it harder to live a sustainable lifestyle
79% want brands to help lead a more sustainable lifestyle

Price, lack of transparency and inconvenience are the key barriers to adopting a more sustainable lifestyle

Would like to see more affordable products, greater honesty / transparency when it comes to sustainability, no greenwashing and clearer information

(source: 159 international students living in CZ)

A photograph of a squirrel clinging to a tree trunk. The squirrel's paws are visible, gripping the bark. To the left of the squirrel, there are clusters of small white flowers. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage.

To address this,
marketing needs
to stop its
business-as-
usual approach.

BAU focuses on:

Financial value creation

Focus on the short-term

Linear value chain

Incremental change

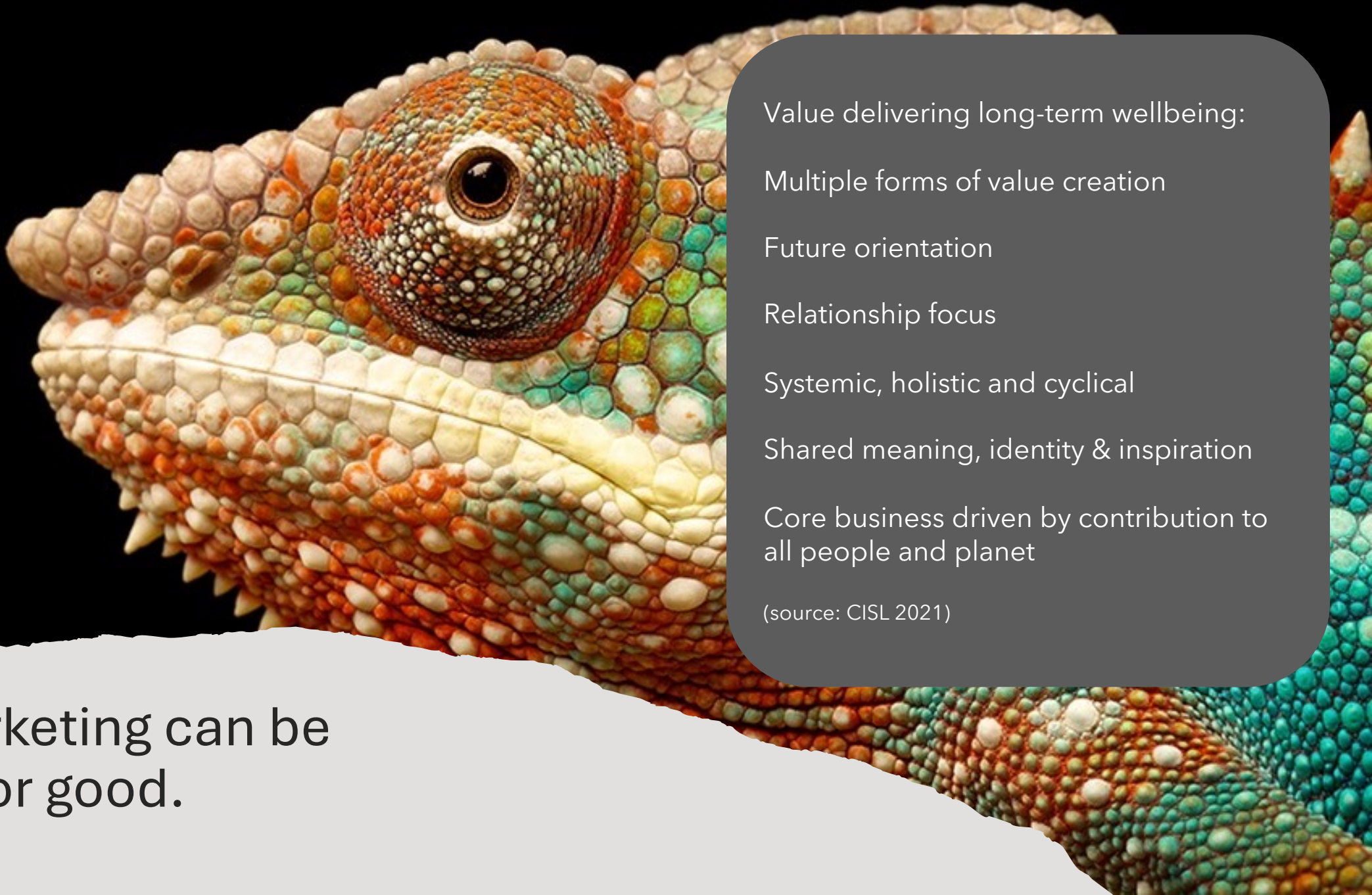
Transactions

Profit maximisation

(source: CISL 2021)



And embrace
a more
sustainable
approach to
marketing



Value delivering long-term wellbeing:

Multiple forms of value creation

Future orientation

Relationship focus

Systemic, holistic and cyclical

Shared meaning, identity & inspiration

Core business driven by contribution to all people and planet

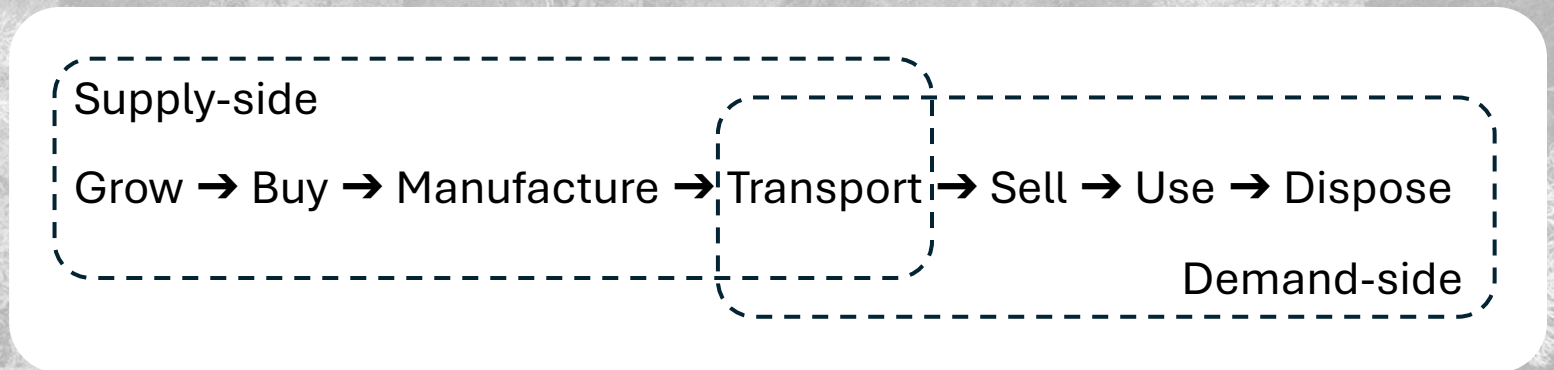
(source: CISL 2021)

Where marketing can be
a change for good.

Seen through
a new lens of
taking into
account the
long-term
wellness of
people and
planet.



Where sustainability is embedded into every single aspect of a company's function.



From purpose,
branding,
marketing,
strategy to
tactics,
governance,
and how it
defines
success.



Where marketing
and sustainability
objectives are
aligned and
shared.

Commercial
objectives

Environmental
objectives

Societal
objectives



3 missions of
marketing:

part duty of care
and part rallying
call

Commercial Mission:

Partner the citizen & shape
behaviour that supports the new
emerging economic models

Environmental Mission:

Protect the environment and aid
its restoration through
responsible consumption,
production and respect for the
true value it delivers

Societal Mission:

Help humans fulfil their
potential in dignity, equality
and in a healthy world

(source: 'Sustainable marketing' by Paul Randle & Alexis Eyre)



Often these
three objectives
make
uncomfortable
bedfellows.



But there are brands that are purpose-driven and can successfully balance all three.



A climate and social justice company that happens to make great tasting ice-cream




Dedicated to protecting nature so that consumers can enjoy their products in the outdoors



Dedicated to ending child slavery in the cocoa supply chain

Things they share in common: (1) purpose driven; (2) focus on commercial, social and environmental impact; (3) dedication to action; (4) trying to solve a societal need



Marketing needs
to look at things
differently from
the past.

Marketing footprint:

What will be the impact on: emissions, waste, pollution, land and soil degradation, loss of habitats and species, human health and inequality?

Marketing brainprint:

What worldviews, identities and lifestyles does the brand shape, normalise and make desirable?

Marketing trade-off:

Is the brand driving business growth at the expense of the planet and society and/or is marketing contributing to the well-being of people and the planet?

By turning a new
page and
embracing a
world of
marketing for
good.



Marketing has
the opportunity
to become part
of the solution
and not just the
problem.





Should we just hang on, hoping things will miraculously improve by themselves?

Or simply wait
until AI gives us
the answer?



Or will we see
the light and
create real
sustainable
change through
sustainable
marketing?



It's time for
marketers to
buzz into action
for the common
good.



To embrace,
feel and do
sustainability.





To make
sustainable
products/services
affordable and
available.

To communicate
sustainability
clearly and
responsibly.



To make a
sustainable
lifestyle
aspirational
and normal.



Marketing can
help reimagine
how we live.





This quest for good challenges
businesses to rethink their purpose

And redefine
success in
terms of the
common good.



This quest isn't
optional, but
essential.



Przewalski wild horses are now thriving in the Chernobyl exclusion zone: the area may not be fit for humans for the next 24,000 years



It is not enough to survive, but businesses must contribute to a thriving future for all.

Our collective
futures will
depend on this.



“Sustainability isn’t simply a goal that a company can achieve and then move on to other things: this is the work, forever and all time.”

Ryan Gellert, Patagonia CEO

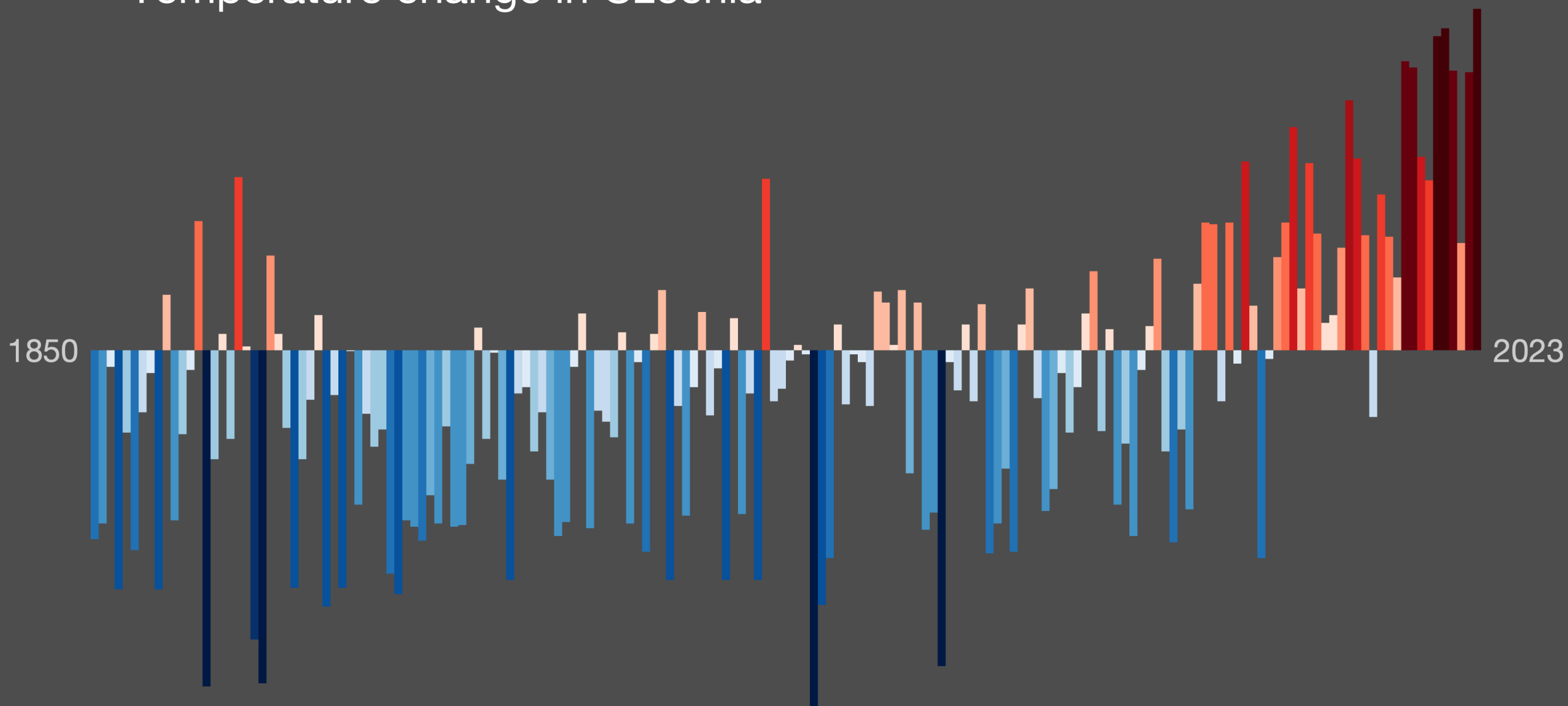




One last thing...

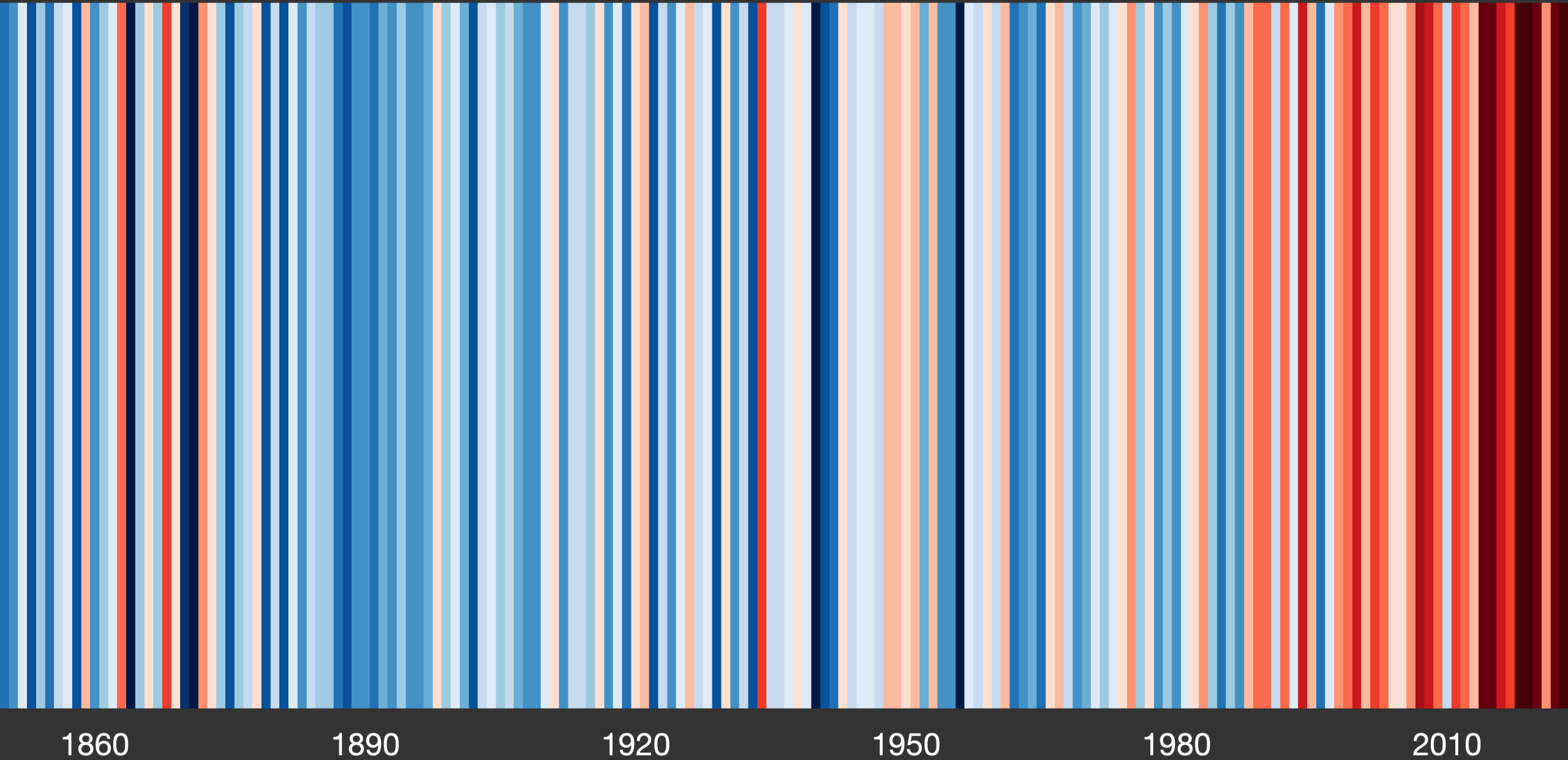
What's with all
the stripes?

Temperature change in Czechia



Temperature change in Czechia since 1850

<https://showyourstripes.info/s/europe/czechia/all>



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A Brit with Dutch, German and Czech roots and a strange-sounding first name to foreigners.

25+ years working as a Strategist in advertising in London, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Prague.

Worked at agencies such as Ogilvy, Leo Burnett, and TBWA on brands like Friesland Foods, HSBC, Nissan, O2, Heineken, Pilsner Urquell, Tesco, Škoda, Zentiva.

Now, combine my time being an independent Brand & Sustainable Marketing Strategist and a Marketing Lecturer at VŠE and several other universities in Prague.

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