

# UNPREDICTIONS

Insights into policy,  
business, tech, media  
and culture around  
the world

March 2023



# FORWARD

I am pleased to introduce ***Unpredictions: Insights into policy, business, tech, media and culture around the world.***

This is [The Weber Shandwick Collective](#) latest perspectives on a variety of critical issues at the intersection of business and society, but to me, the unique value of *Unpredictions* is the range of perspectives captured in this single report. Jim Meszaros, Executive Vice President, Global Public Affairs, crafted *Unpredictions*' overall editorial vision, working closely with Nachum Kaplan, Senior Vice President, Financial & Capital Markets, Asia Pacific. But the sum total of views and thinking are drawn from several colleagues across our global network, whose expertise spans across branding, corporate communications, public affairs, sustainability, marketing, popular culture, organizational transformation and more. There are also perspectives from [The Collective Senior Advisors](#), a group of external advisors drawn from business, politics and government, academia and civil society, all of whom counsel our clients on strategy, stakeholder management and public positioning.

Beyond any specific insight, scenario or data point, *Unpredictions* raises some overarching questions for organizations and their leaders to consider:

## **Is your organization built for uncertainty?**

If the last three years have taught us anything, it's that uncertainty now defines all our operating systems, be it in capital markets, employee expectations or geopolitics. Leaders still need to make definitive decisions related to strategy, stakeholders and reputation. But predictable planning cycles are giving way to a more event-

based operational rhythm which requires changing how we work to effectively manage risk and capture upside.

## **Do you have narrative intelligence?**

The need for an organizational narrative is widely accepted. But more recently, we find that every narrative confronts one or more counter-narratives. Significant resources are often invested to monitor, analyze and respond to known detractors. But new counter-narratives can quickly arise from completely new antagonists in a growing number of physical and digital "town squares." An organization's response shouldn't be to simply widen what is monitored with the same old tools to generate longer reports. Instead, narrative intelligence must be used to identify data sets that reflect multiple stakeholder viewpoints; and a blend of analytical tools and human expertise should be applied to understand the conversations that truly matter to your organization.

## **Does your decision making consider Total Stakeholder Capital?**

Most organizations strive to make data-backed business decisions that consider a range of stakeholders. But the rising velocity of societal issues such as climate risk, social inequities and political polarization, is stirring stronger, often conflicting, expectations between and amongst employees, investors, policy makers and other stakeholders. Every decision an organization makes either earns or expends reputational capital with each of its stakeholders. Not all stakeholders are of equal importance for each choice made by an organization. But decisions should be made keeping in mind the holistic – and finite – balance sheet of an organization's Total Stakeholder Capital.

I hope you find *Unpredictions* as interesting and useful as I have.

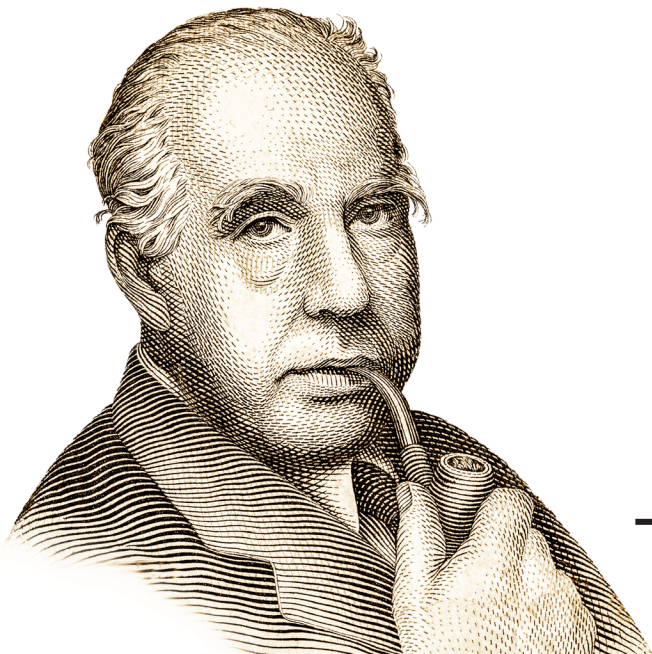
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**Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future.**



– Niels Bohr

## Introduction

Cast your memory back to the opening days of March 2020. Try to imagine what you would have said to someone who predicted that in the next couple of years a World War I-era pandemic would kill millions of people and create economic disruptions across the globe, or a World War II-era conflict would break out when Russia invaded Ukraine with rippling impacts on global energy, food and economic markets.

In 1972, when Chou En Lai, then premier of China, was asked to assess the impact of the French Revolution, he said it's "too early to tell." He may, in fact, have been actually referring to the turmoil that swept France in the 1960's, but the point is the same: it takes a long time to foresee the consequences of major events.

With that wisdom in mind, we asked professionals across our global network, and a few outside experts, to look at the consequences of these major events and what they might foretell about the future of politics, business, culture and media – with a focus not only on this year but a longer view over the horizon. Instead of desperately searching for answers to predict the future, this report seeks to make some un-predictions about what to watch to help navigate a future that, as always, is uncertain.

Here are major trends that will shape our world in 2023 and beyond.

## The world economy is slowing, and some countries may face recession.

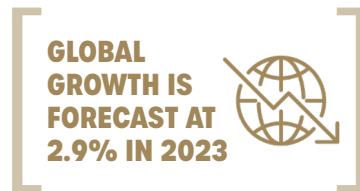


### INSIGHTS

The uncertainty of recession will hang over 2023 and possibly into 2024 and intersect with everything from politics and technology to media and culture. The year began with policymakers and central bankers continuing to try to lower inflation while staving off recession. How successful they are in this, and how severe any slowdown will be, will shape the wider political, economic, workplace and cultural landscapes over the mid term.

Economics will also determine how much resources and attention the world can devote to tackling other global issues such as climate change, energy security, defense, equality and poverty alleviation. This will, in turn, affect how increasingly fractured our politics becomes, locally, nationally and internationally.

In the short-term, the impact will be uneven across the world as governments, central banks, corporations, investors and consumers navigate slower growth, persistent inflation, and the continuing impact of a pandemic which remains a threat to public and economic health. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global growth to fall from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023, and then rise to 3.1% in 2024. Many global companies are already



preparing for a mild recession by adjusting hiring and layoff actions, delaying investment and shoring up balance sheets. Market volatility will continue in the coming months, but eventually an upswing in equity markets will be an early sign that economic growth is on the horizon. As in past recessions, enterprises that have built a culture of resilience in their long-term planning will emerge stronger and more competitive.



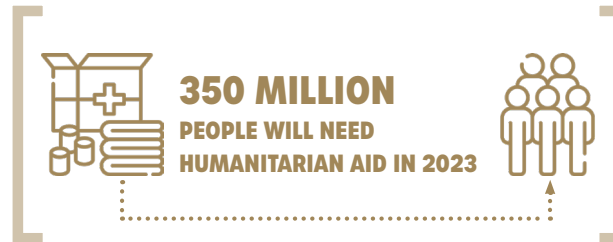
### IMPLICATIONS

In the U.S. and Europe, governments will have limited ability to promote growth through fiscal stimulus. This lack of policy ammunition comes as central banks, led by the U.S. Federal Reserve, the Bank of England and the European Central Bank, are focused on fighting inflation rather than encouraging growth.

Higher interest rates have strengthened the U.S. dollar, making it harder for global companies and emerging markets to manage debt. A strong labor market means any U.S. recession is expected to be mild. A mild winter has moderated Europe's energy crisis, as countries stockpiled natural gas reserves last fall to replace Russian gas exports. But Europe will need to begin refilling reserves in the months ahead, which could drive up demand and prices. Europe must also accelerate its transition to renewable energy sources.

A prolonged or deeper recession could trigger trade protectionism and supply chain disruptions as countries act to protect their domestic markets. In sectors such as automobiles, electronics and pharmaceuticals, a lack of raw inputs is making it harder for businesses to deliver finished goods. Companies have sought to diversify supply chains and “re-shore” production over the past three years – a trend that is likely to continue and possibly accelerate in the years ahead. This will create opportunities for countries to attract new investments in high-value areas such as technology, semiconductors, clean energy, automotives and advanced manufacturing.

The global workforce is being reshaped. Even though a recession may shift the demand for talent, employers should continue to prioritize employees as a key stakeholder or risk losing top talent, souring organizational culture and tarnishing their employer brand.



The OECD-led global minimum tax will face a test in 2023 and beyond. Over 130 countries have agreed to a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15%. The deal will alter international corporate taxation by helping countries prevent corporate tax evasion. Some countries – including the United States – will face difficulty enacting the tax.



China will be the biggest uncertainty in the near-term. China is relaxing its harsh zero-COVID measures while trying to prevent a new public health crisis and jump-start an economy that is growing slower than the rest of East Asia for the first time since the 1990s. China’s reengagement with the world – through diplomatic efforts, business partnerships, cross-border investments and inbound and outbound travel – will have broader global consequences and rippling impacts this year and beyond.

Looking over the horizon, China will forge ahead with increased state interference in the economy, a deleveraging the real estate sector, and creating stronger links between Chinese tech firms and its military and intelligence services. President Xi also wants to shore up China’s self-sufficiency in manufacturing, energy, agriculture and technology to lessen its vulnerability to global economic disruptions while still influencing global rules and standards. Strategic competition with the United States, Europe and Asia will accelerate.

Natural and man-made disasters mean that human suffering will worsen. Beyond Ukraine – now the world’s worst displacement crisis – ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Myanmar will drag on. In Afghanistan, much of the country has been pushed into poverty and despair. Humanitarian crises are also likely in Haiti, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sub-Saharan Africa will face a difficult year.

Across the Global South, slower growth, rising debt burdens, food and water insecurity, the consequences of climate change, and regional conflicts will combine to weaken socio-economic conditions. Countries that have still not fully recovered from the COVID pandemic will fall further behind in their ability to meet the basic health needs of their population. Government actions that stigmatize and discriminate against marginalized populations such as migrant populations, transgender and the LGBTQ+ communities will increase. Social unrest will be on the rise in societies and among communities not satisfied with the status quo.

More than 350 million people will need humanitarian aid in 2023 at a time when wealthy donor nations, facing their own economic challenges, are pulling back support. This puts pressure on multilateral organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), development banks and private aid and religious organizations to ramp up their support.

A fractured geopolitical world is moving toward two competing blocs: an anti-Western bloc led by China, Iran and Russia and a Western-leaning bloc led by the United States and Europe.



### INSIGHTS

Global alliances are shifting in the face of the war in Ukraine, changing power dynamics and countries pursuing their own economic, security, technology and energy interests. China, Russia and Iran are challenging a Western-led international order. Many countries across the Global South are increasingly resentful of the status quo as the promised benefits of globalization remain unfilled for their societies.



### IMPLICATIONS

February 20 marked the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine. With that milestone passed, there remains little chance of a near-term military or diplomatic breakthrough. The likely scenario is a grinding stand-off with neither side able to achieve military objectives. Both sides may prepare for a spring offensive. If Ukraine continues to frustrate Russian ambitions, President Putin could introduce nuclear battlefield weapons. It is uncertain how Europe and the United States would respond. The war will continue to impact broader global energy, food and economic markets. U.S. and European support for

Ukraine remain strong for now, but political and public resolve could weaken over time.

The Biden administration is pursuing an industrial strategy designed to ensure long-term U.S. competitiveness in advanced computer technologies, semiconductors and microelectronics; quantum information systems and artificial intelligence; biotech and bio manufacturing; and clean energy technologies. The U.S. strategy is to restrict dual-use exports to China, tech deals between American and Chinese firms, and prioritize regional alliances with India, Japan, South Korea and Australia.



**JAPAN WILL DOUBLE ITS DEFENSE BUDGET OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO 2% OF GDP BY 2027**

European leaders are increasingly united in their assessment that China is managing its global rise in ways counter to Western values and disregarding rules at home and abroad to advance its interests. But Europe has yet to align around a cohesive strategy – one that balances Europe's need to deal with China as both an economic partner and competitor. Europe is more dependent than the U.S. on trade and investment ties with China.

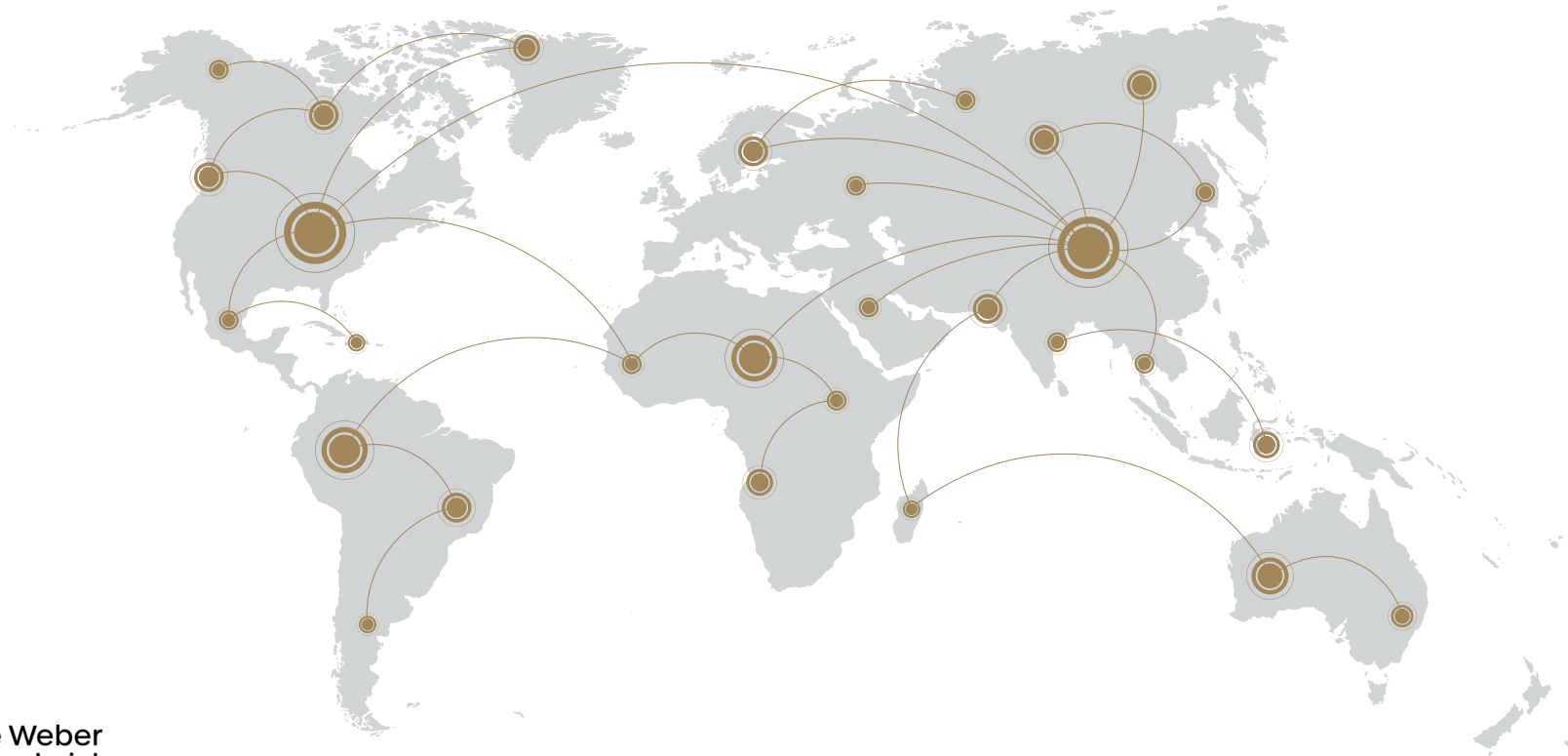
Japan will double its defense budget over the next five years to 2% of GDP by 2027. This will make its defense spending the third largest in



## KEEP AN EYE ON

the world behind the United States and China. Japan will amend its constitution and acquire offensive capabilities in what will be its largest military build-up since World War II. France and other European governments will also consider increasing their defense spending to meet security challenges on the Continent. Sweden and Finland are seeking to join NATO.

Some countries are seeking a neutral status between the two major blocs. This includes India, which has not supported Western sanctions on Russia as it pursues a neutral foreign policy, and many countries in Africa. In the Middle East, long-time U.S. allies as well as Iran are looking to Russia and China for economic and security ties. Companies that operate globally will need to be mindful of how geopolitical divides or alliances may affect internal dynamics and organizational culture. Successful companies will remain committed to their values, keep communication open internally, and leverage listening tools to keep their global workforces united in their organization's purpose and strategy.





## Energy security is national security in 2023 as countries race to shore up self-sufficiency while transitioning to low carbon alternatives.



### INSIGHTS

Investments in green energy are increasing every year, but so is fossil fuel use. Russia will continue to find markets for its oil and gas, led by India and China, with both countries enjoying favorable market terms from Moscow. Germany's dependence on Russian energy has ignited ambitions for self-sufficiency in many European countries. Europeans are making deals with African markets for gas supplies and increasing LNG imports from the United States. The drive for energy security will prompt some governments to rethink plans to phase out nuclear power or invest in it anew.



### IMPLICATIONS

The economics of wind and solar power are today more compelling – a big win for sustainability – but not a short-term solution in this energy environment. Solar and wind energy consumption are forecast to grow by 11% in 2023 as new projects come online. Over the long term, Asia will be the world's biggest market for renewable energy investment, with the largest share in China, India, Japan and South Korea.

People want to save the planet, but first they want to stay warm in their

homes, pay less for gasoline and not work in businesses challenged by rising fuel costs and the threat of shortages. Consumers and industry alike need affordable, reliable power. This means that the foreseeable future there will be more oil production and coal mining while countries secure the financing and innovation necessary to transition to clean energy.

**“2023 is likely to be a year where energy supply and energy transition priorities collide. As the U.S. Congress pivots away from clean energy spending, energy markets will focus on deployment and delivery.”**

– **Sasha Mackler**  
Executive Director of the Energy Program,  
Bipartisan Policy Center





## KEEP AN EYE ON

LNG will play an increasingly important role as a transition fuel that will help keep the lights on as the world moves from fossil fuels to sustainable energy. LNG prices will remain high and volatile in 2023 before huge amounts of new gas fields commence production in 2024-25.

Clean hydrogen is enjoying unprecedented political and business momentum, with policies, projects and government funding expanding around the world. But significant headwinds remain. Producing hydrogen from renewable energy is costly. The development of hydrogen-related infrastructure will be expensive and slow, holding back widespread adoption.



Technology has empowered billions of people, but societies are increasingly wary of its harmful impacts on culture, politics, media, society and human behavior and a backlash is brewing.



### INSIGHTS

The largest technology companies are powerful global brands with revenues that exceed the GDP of many countries. Some governments, including the United States, European Union and China, are pursuing laws and regulations to rein them in. The challenge is to do so without wrecking the culture of innovation that drives economic growth, creates high-value jobs and provides the services and products citizens want.

In the United States, Democrats and Republicans support tech reform but are not aligned on priorities. The 118th Congress in 2023-24 will seek to regulate e-commerce, moderate online speech and censorship, enact a data privacy law and strengthen cyber defenses.

In Europe, implementation of two major initiatives enacted in 2022 – the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act – gets underway with large firms having to comply with new rules.

China is creating links between its tech firms and military and intelligence services. Multinational firms are finding it harder to comply with new Chinese laws on privacy, cybersecurity and data security.



### IMPLICATIONS

Social media platforms are an essential tool for citizens to organize and push back against authoritarian rule, fight for social justice, or simply complain about the state of governance. But social platforms also enable extremists to preach hate, create chaos, and spread misinformation and disinformation. Limiting the excesses of social

**THERE IS AN URGENCY TO ACT BEFORE INNOVATION IN AREAS SUCH AS AI AND THE METAVERSE MAKES THEM POWERFUL ENOUGH TO ACCELERATE SOCIETAL HARM**



media is a tricky endeavor, however, for nations rooted in the concept of freedom of speech. There is also a growing concern about social media's impact on children. People are not going to stop using technology, but governments, tech leaders and users must find ways to address its most damaging impacts. And there is an urgency to act before innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Metaverse makes these technologies powerful enough to accelerate societal harm if misused.



## KEEP AN EYE ON

Governments will prioritize crypto regulation. After the collapse of FTX, the urgency to regulate the crypto market is accelerating. 2023 will be a decisive year to establish new rules and improve supervision, control, protect investors and rebuild trust. Regulatory efforts will be led by the United States (both the Biden administration and Congress), the European Union and the Financial Stability Board (FSB), an international authority that oversees the global financial system, and which is working on a crypto regulatory framework in 2023.

The Metaverse will continue to define itself. But so far, technologists have failed to demonstrate its practical or even commercial value. Workers will want to have meaningful and hybrid interactions, not just a clunky VR headset to awkwardly engage with colleagues in a virtual meeting. Consumers will want experiences that enhance reality, not merely substitute it.

Employees will continue to be concerned about the incorporation of AI and further automation or digitalization of their work. There is a growing fear that AI and digitalization will replace workers in many occupations. Leadership should continue to consider the impact of technology on the current and future skills of their workforce, and find ways to upskill or equip existing employees to pivot roles and remain employable if their current tasks can be automated or digitized.



**2023 will be an even more turbulent year for our social and digital ecosystem. We will continue to see splintering, upheaval, but also some exciting shifts towards federated systems away from centralized platforms.**



**– Claire Wardle, PhD  
Professor of the Practice and Co-Director,  
Information Futures Lab, Brown University**

Cyberattacks by both state and non-state actors will grow in frequency and sophistication, threatening essential infrastructure and requiring more aggressive responses from governments and companies.



### INSIGHTS

Cyberattacks will inflict \$1.5 trillion in damage annually by 2025. Two-thirds of global executives consider cybercrime their most significant threat in the coming year. Interpol member countries consider “ransomware” and “phishing/online scams” the second and third largest transnational criminal threats after money laundering. Companies with plans to manage these variables will be better protected against attacks. This includes ensuring that employees know how to respond to external threats, and proactively nurture an organizational culture to minimize the risk of threats from the inside.



### IMPLICATIONS

Ransomware attacks will continue to wreak havoc, cripple IT systems and disrupt supply chains. Criminal syndicates are leveraging franchising models, ransomware-as-a-service and AI technologies to lower the cost and barriers to entry for smaller actors. While ransomware attacks grab media headlines, attacks that exploit human behavior and error eclipse them in volume, with phishing and credential theft topping the list.



### KEEP AN EYE ON

In 2023, governments and regulators will move toward faster reporting and greater transparency. “Hacktivism” – where ideology, rather than financial gain, motivates attackers – will increase. This is a threat to governments and companies that touch large segments of the population who feel disenfranchised. Ransom attackers will escalate extortion crimes, such as publishing compromising information on executives to pressure employers.



Public trust on traditional institutions – government, the media, and religion – is waning. Citizens are increasingly looking for corporate leaders and brands that embody and extol the values they find important.



### INSIGHTS

Younger workers are reshaping the workplace and expecting more from their employers. Many expect more than a transactional relationship with their employer, and want companies to contribute to societal change. A recent Weber Shandwick national survey reported that Gen Z (76%) and Millennials (72%) are most likely to share this view, compared with Gen X (59%) and Baby Boomers (45%). For many consumers, a company's stand on societal issues is as important as its products and services. Across the Global South, youth populations are the fastest growing segments of society, with the need for governments to prioritize job creating investments.



### IMPLICATIONS

In some countries, corporate leaders face increasing pressure to speak out on controversial political and social issues. They can no longer take for granted that their products or services are so indispensable that the consumers will ignore their values and behavior in their purchasing decisions. Organizations that protect their reputation with the same vigor as they do other assets (e.g.,

intellectual property, human capital, etc.) will be best positioned to weather continued instability and polarization.

In a global war for talent, employee loyalty is an asset. Many want their employers to care about social issues and offer leadership that models positive behavior, but they also want fair pay, generous benefits, workplace flexibility and job security – the latter especially in an economic slowdown. Corporate leaders need to understand changing employee sentiments across different generations and watch for employee burnout and mental health concerns.



### KEEP AN EYE ON

Despite some pushback against “woke” policies and recession concerns, corporate commitments to ESG are here to stay. The main reasons are that climate and diversity actions help attract and retain talent, are becoming embedded in business strategies, and seen as essential drivers of performance.

ESG is becoming a flashpoint in the United States, reflecting political and geographic differences. But companies will continue to be accountable for their esg performance even as ESG advocates try to align around a set of common global standards.



### INSIGHTS

Citizens consistently say companies must earn their license to operate by demonstrating ESG leadership. Having a 2050 carbon-neutral plan is no longer enough. Investors, employees, activists and consumers want specific actions and transparent results. A recession will not be an excuse to reduce climate and DEI actions. Greenwashing lawsuits are the rise. The ESG debate has moved beyond financial markets into politics and the corporate mainstream.

ESG has been criticized as an ineffective tool because it is hard to define, seeks to satisfy many stakeholders with different agendas, and creates confusion among both companies and investors. ESG ratings are often subjective and inconsistent, making it difficult for companies to demonstrate their ESG credentials and for investors and other stakeholders to assess them. A global standard would provide greater clarity, but there is not an agreement on who should write or enforce it.



### IMPLICATIONS

In the United States, the Biden administration will implement the climate provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act for the remainder of its term. Republicans in Congress will push back against new funding. Several U.S. states have issued ESG-specific mandates to exclude asset managers, funds and banks from supporting ESG policies. The U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) is expected to issue a new rule in 2023 mandating climate reporting for public companies,

**“Brands that champion an environmental or social cause that is authentic and matters to its consumers can stand out from the pack.”**

– Adrian Hodges  
Director, Adrian Hodges Advisory, Ltd.



including Scope 3 emissions. The SEC rule will face a legal challenge, with several industry groups and states already signaling such intent. But companies should prepare now for heightened climate reporting mandates.

The EU will continue to enact ESG-related rules and regulations. Implementation of the European Green Deal will advance, including an effort to create a green hydrogen economy through a €3 billion investment in a European Hydrogen Bank. Two EU directives coming into force – the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D) – will require additional ESG disclosures. The EU opposes U.S. incentives for electric vehicles, which favor domestic production over imports. If no accommodation is reached, the trade dispute could escalate.

Companies with global operations will have to comply with different ESG regulations and navigate a myriad of rules and reporting requirements that challenge even the largest organizations. Beyond Europe and the United States, this momentum is expanding to other markets. At the same time, concerns about greenwashing are on the rise, with activists filing thousands of lawsuits against companies and organizations around the world, claiming companies are not living up to their commitments.

ESG increasingly matters in Asia. The region accounts for 40% of the global economy, 60% of global carbon emissions, and 70% of global supply chains. While ESG is more fully engrained in companies headquartered in Europe and North America, Asia is poised to catch up fast in the years ahead, driven by the impact of regulatory changes and investor and societal demand.



Climate-related disasters cost the global economy more than \$250 billion in 2022. 2023 could be even more volatile if an equatorial Pacific El Niño fully develops this year. While governments agree on the urgent to act, developed economies and emerging markets are not aligned on how to finance the trillions of dollars needed to decarbonize the global economy. At the UN-led COP27 negotiations, countries agreed to establish a “loss and damage” fund to support countries impacted by climate-driven disasters. This was a political statement. There will be contentious negotiations, starting in 2023, to define how the fund is to be set up and operated. It’s unlikely an agreement will be reached before COP28 in Dubai in November.





## Countries to watch in 2023 and beyond.



**BRAZIL**

Brazil's new government will seek to usher in an improvement in the country's diplomatic relations and environmental policies.

Lula da Silva has begun his third term, after having served as president from 2003 to 2010. President Lula will seek broader engagement with the United States, Europe and in Latin America. He will be checked by a new Congress and Senate that are among the most conservative ever. Lula is also committed to slowing the pace of Amazon deforestation, which increased substantially over the last four years. This will revive international donations for environmental protection suspended under the Bolsonaro administration.



**INDIA**

Its economy demonstrated resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic and is positioned to be minimally impacted by the headwinds a global slowdown.

Global offshoring, digitalization, investments in tech and manufacturing and a clean energy transition are revving up India's economy. Growth is on track for India's GDP to surpass Germany and Japan by the end of the decade, becoming the world's third largest market. India's population will surpass that of China this year. India is serving as chair of the G20 during 2023. Its G20 presidency is being designed to bolster Prime Minister Modi's international stature ahead of national elections scheduled in 2024. Any renewed conflict on the India-China border could have broader economic and diplomatic consequences.



**TURKIYE**

Presidential and parliamentary elections will take place in 2023.

Turkiye is facing a difficult year in the aftermath of devastating earthquakes in February that have killed more than 45,000 people and left hundreds of communities destroyed. Humanitarian aid

has poured in from more than 100 countries around the world, but rebuilding will take years. The country's presidential election, scheduled for June, may be delayed until later in the year. Opinion polls before the earthquake suggested the vote would be President Erdogan's toughest challenge in the face of the rising cost of living and a slump in the lira. The earthquake brings further uncertainty as the government faces criticism over its emergency response.



**Anger over soaring prices, high unemployment, corruption, political repression and the law requiring women to dress modestly and cover their hair have sent Iranians to the streets.**

The Iranian government has responded harshly with executions, mass imprisonments and a crackdown on Internet use. Unlike past protests, this one has mobilized large segments of the population, including women, and is unlikely to be calmed by promises of future reform. The outlook for the nuclear agreement is fading – advancing the day when the West and Middle East will have to confront a nuclear-armed Iran.



**Divided government in Washington will produce gridlock, with political battles taking place against the backdrop of a slower economy and the 2024 elections.** Republicans control the House of Representatives, making it harder for the Biden administration to enact major legislation. Progressive efforts to usher in a new era of social welfare and climate action will be stalled until at least after the 2024 national elections. Unable to achieve big legislative wins in Congress, the Biden administration

may pursue executive actions and Federal rulemaking in areas such as labor, antitrust, climate and tech reform. Such efforts will provoke pushback from Republicans in Congress and inevitable court battles. The 2024 presidential and congressional elections are already lining up as an intense, high-stakes and polarizing battle of ideology and political control.



**The city-state is emerging as Asia's leading financial and business center.**

Before the pandemic, Hong Kong and Singapore competed for this title, with Hong Kong holding the edge due to its role as a gateway to China. But Singapore better navigated the pandemic and reopened with a new energy. Singapore is attracting foreign talent, innovation-led investments and it thrives as a multicultural society in the heart of Southeast Asia – which will be world's most dynamic economic region in 2023.



There are lessons to be learned for a world that was largely unprepared for a global pandemic, or a war in Europe, and the resulting consequences and impacts of each across the planet. Looking ahead, political, corporate and societal leaders should act to build greater resilience into the interwoven economic, public health, governance, technology and social systems. For surely, there will be more global shocks in the future that may create further social, financial and political disruptions among vast swaths of humanity.

Let's end on one hopeful note. Amid conflict and distress, the planet's eight billion people today – on balance – enjoy greater well-being, health and prosperity than any other generation in human history. While progress does not proceed in a straight, upward line among all people and societies at all times, it does usually advance. This should provide some hope that for all the world's difficulties, today's problems are no more intractable than those of the past.

## Who we are

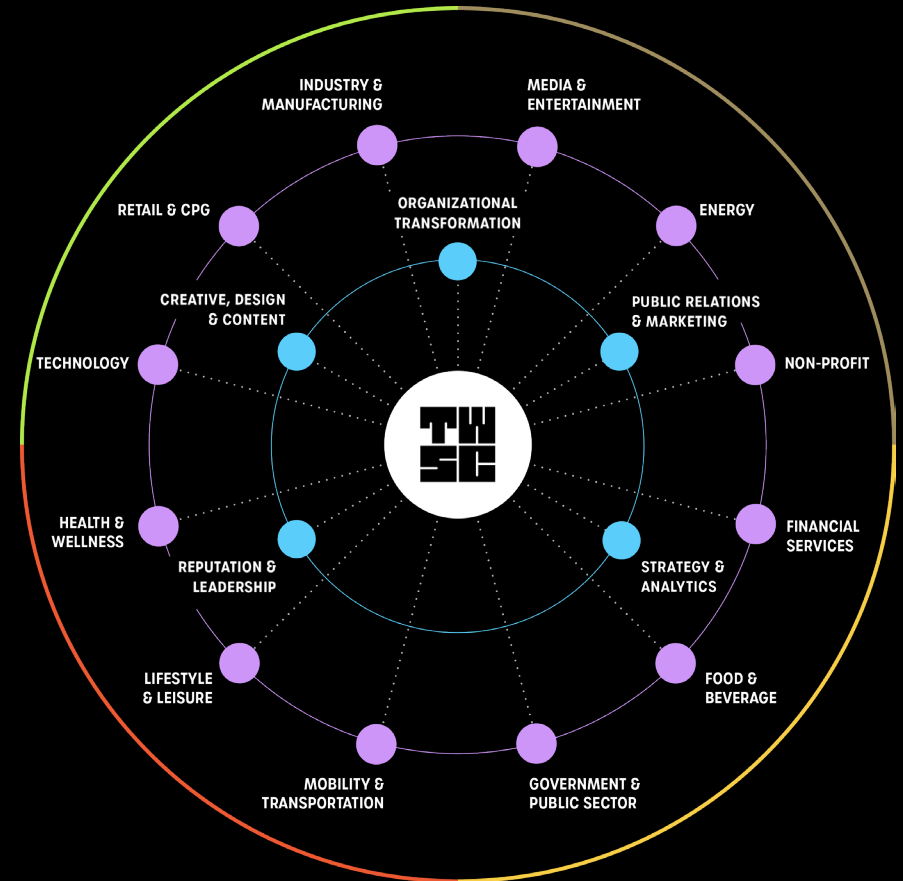
### Individual Talent. Collective Strength.

We are the strategic communications and consulting network built for the convergence of society, media, policy and technology. Together, our range of specialist capabilities help shape successful organizations.

### Business & Society Futures

In an environment often defined by complexity, conflict and risk, organizations have new opportunities – and an imperative – to deliver value for all stakeholders, including shareholders. The Weber Shandwick Collective's [Business & Society Futures](#) counsels senior leaders to decode disruptions, clarify complexity, and meet a new standard of leadership.

We seamlessly work together to address all our clients' needs. Our specialty firms enable us to provide a complete marketing services offering – from culture marketing to public affairs, advertising and market research.



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- Sectors

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