CR060

Being a corporate sustainability activist with Rainer Karcher, Allianz Technology

Capgemini

CR060

Being a corporate sustainability activist with Rainer Karcher, Allianz Technology

Disclaimer: Please be aware that this transcript from the Cloud Realities podcast has been automatically generated, so errors may occur.

[00:00:00] There's a big fraud on social media yesterday as there is every year around this where the Glastonbury lineup came out. Oh, yeah. And it seems to constantly be commented on by, you know, predominantly middle aged men going, well, that's a terrible lineup. And it's like, well, you do, you do realize it's actually not.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman and I'm Rob Kernahan.

And you'll notice that we haven't got Sjoukje with us in today's show. She is on vacation. How dare she do something fun and nice now.

I know. And somewhere absolutely lovely with beaches and sun and, and, and, and, and, and, and, Pina Coladas. What a nice [00:01:00] thought. Have you heard the Pina Colada song? I don't know the Pina Colada song very well. Sing it! No David, I am not going to destroy our listenership by singing on the podcast. Wise Rob, very professional.

On today's show then, we are going to dig in a bit more into the world of sustainability, and we're going to look at the complex relationship between between sustainability and wider aspects of corporate social responsibility. And look at a three pillar framework that deals with both the consumption aspect of sustainability, as well as the measurement and reporting aspect, and most critically engagement and how you actually get people to lean in and think about things differently and, and, and, you know, changing behaviors.

But before we get to that, Rob and I had been out for lunch the day with our mate, Chris. And we walked into the foyer of our office and, uh, Rob gives me a nudge and he points over into the corner of the, uh, of the reception where there was a [00:02:00] lady selling scented candles. And, you know, you, you'll remember from a previous show that Rob sometimes has a side hack where he's on the perfume counter in the reception.

And he goes to me, Hey Dave, I'm going to break into that game. So like, give me a minute. I'm just going to have a word with a woman. So he goes over as a quick word. And then a bit later on, he goes, I'll tell you about that later, but there's another thing I've been thinking about this week. So I was like, Rob, what are you confused about now?

Yes, Dave. I bought shares. Yeah. Um, do you remember back? to the 60s. Well, you might be able to remember. I can't. But, uh, there was always this thing, the vision of, um, the robot butler in the home, right? Now I'm not going to be confused about robot butlers because I ain't got one. I don't know. Is this the same as the, uh, the The Japanese robot that looks after all people.

Well, that is that is coming. We have discussed. But you know what is this? I was reflecting on people get very excited about the concept, and then it [00:03:00] never really comes true. And I was thinking about smart cities the other day, right? This concept of like the Jetsons, this completely integrated, seamless, autonomous thing that just makes our life really easy.

Um, you know, 10 years ago, they were waxing lyrical about smart cities, and they're just not there. And quite frankly, most countries can't make the trains run on time. So I think about that and go, all the roads work. And you're like, how are we ever going to deliver a smart city? Right? And so I think smart cities are the next failure that is, was robot.

Butlers, cause you know, how are we ever going to get that together? But actually, if you think about it and all the things that are important in smart cities, like energy efficiency and, you know, optimizing route journeys and things, there's some really good stuff in there, but it's just not happening and I'm confused.

I never quite understood. A smart city really was. It always seemed to me to be just like a bit of marketing. Yes. Like, you know, you know what I mean? It's like, well, if you put together a traffic light monitoring system and some [00:04:00] smart building monitoring it, does that equal a smart city? In my head, a smart city looks like the Jetsons, man.

And if you don't get to that, it ain't a smart enough city. Yeah, it's this, it's this, uh, you know, you just don't have to think about how you go through the city and everything just integrates perfectly and it's very efficient and all that sort of stuff, and there's been lots of visions will ever pull that off.

I just don't think the humans will be capable of delivering it. Unless, of course, you get the robots rise, which we know we're all going to have, and maybe the robots can create the smart city, maybe that's the answer that we need. I have absolutely no doubt that that's going to be the solution to the problem.

We remember when we had some folks on talking about quantum and like, one of the things they said was like, quantum computers are finally going to fix the M 25 problem, which is the ring road that goes around London and it gets horribly congested. Humans have been trying to solve that problem for like 50 odd years.

And like, as soon as quantum comes along, They'll have that fixed. So that's probably when you're going to get to smart cities. If you think about it, say you've been on that problem for that length of time, and then somebody goes quantum computer, switch it on and 10 seconds later, it's fixed. That'd be quite a depressing thing for the individual who just [00:05:00] wasted their whole life trying to make traffic work and the computer solved it in an instant.

Exactly. Well, look, on that slightly disappointing note, let's meet our guest today and dig into our main subject. So I'm delighted to say we've got Rainer Karcher. It was the chief sustainability officer at Allianz Technology. Rainer, great to see you. Thanks for joining us today. Do you just want to say hello and say a little bit about yourself?

Absolutely with pleasure. And I have to be very much serious now because otherwise, I mean, with all the ideas and the stories you've shared up front, this is just gorgeous. And I would have loved to hear you singing the Pina Colada song. I'll do a special release episode. I'll tell you what, you'd listen to it.

I think you'd regret that decision. It depends on the amount of Pina Coladas you maybe had up front. Don't even get him started on Jump by Van Halen. Oh, wow. Okay. So that Might be a different angle. So let me just quickly introduce myself as you requested it to. So I'm Rainer. I'm really happy to have the opportunity to be with you today.

I'm located in the southern rural [00:06:00] district of Munich. I'm a father of three. I'm very much an environmental focused person in regard of sustainability, but not only from an environmental perspective, but in a holistic perspective of sustainability, I do have a focus on making things happen and sharing them with others.

I do have currently the role, um, as you've described it in Allianz Technology, but in addition, I am Chief Sustainability Officer of Sustainable IT. org, which is a non financial, non governance organization with the objective to define sustainability standards in IT and with IT and share that, um, with others.

And beside that, I'm just a human being, um, 47 years old, um, and with 26 years of history in IT. You refer to yourself, I just want to get this phrase right, Rainer. Corporate sustainability activist? Climate activist in a suit. Climate activist in a suit, right. Respectable activism, that's

what I like. Yeah, and it's a bit of a, well, turn it the other way around thing, because activists, if you think on one, [00:07:00] on a climate activist, this is then the people in the typical clothing very much gluing themselves somewhere. And the activism comes mostly with doing mostly bad things and throwing, I don't know, pain against art or whatever things my activism is to share whatever I do openly with others. And that comes with a business and enterprise background. And that's a bit of that why that suit, which is something you won't expect with a climate activist, just gets a nice turn.

And how do you then mobilize around that. What does that mean on a day to day basis versus say just working in the area of sustainability? Mostly it is to show whatever I do in an open way and to share that with others and make it wide labeled accessible for everyone who would like to have that. Um, so the activism itself mostly is on stages, on panels, on keynotes, on impulses on podcasts. Um, so I'm quite actively showing whatever I do, the do's and the don'ts and the goes and the no goes. And whoever is interested in getting to make use of that, um, it's more than happy to do [00:08:00] so. So it's not about intellectual property. It's not about competitiveness. It's not about keeping that within my own little pillar of Allianz or formerly Siemens.

Um, but to share that with the world. And I mean, the word activist itself has a bit of an emotional reaction attached to it for the things we just discussed, you find when you introduce yourself under that, it creates a lot of curiosity and a bit of surprise. I suppose that drags people into the conversation, get interested about why you're different from the approach.

Correct. And I mean, the thing is, the term sustainability, meanwhile, is very inflationary in use. Everybody's listening to that, like, oh, gosh, again, sustainability, just. Get away with that. And the activism aspect brings an emotional aspect, which then raises the attention to people. Okay. He seems to be an activist, but in a suit, let's just listen to that.

So that is at least a bit of a door open on in an emotional way and, and creates the first type of an interest. Right. Is it a level of engagement with a subject matter and trying to help resolve the issue? Something that you think that actually could or should become [00:09:00] part of everybody's professional life?

Or is it something that you kind of specifically sort of carve out as You know your meaningful role and if you see what I mean, if you get that distinction, well, actually a bit of both. Um, so from, from a technical perspective, we are all very much on digitalization and on currently now AI and AI is the term in 2024.

Um, and everybody is just looking into, The advantage is looking into the opportunities. Everybody's playing around with that. But very little people are already looking into the flip side of the coin. And I mean, it comes with a price, it comes with energy consumption, like crazy, it comes with ethical aspects, it comes with bias, it comes even with racism, depending on who did the the AI.

And this is a bit of where I'm trying to open the perspective and the combination of it and of sustainability, like I'm treating it. And I've treated and started right from the first moment on in a holistic approach and very much oriented on the sustainable development goals of the United Nations is just trying to focus on all of those things [00:10:00] at the same time.

And that's exactly what I think is. And this is the second part on why I said a bit of both. In our day to day living, we mostly focus on very little things if it comes to save the planet. And the aspect saving the planet indicates that, well, we need to do something, but it's the different way around. We need to stop doing things and do less in most of the times.

And we need to understand that there is way more effect than we might think at that moment. It's a global thing. It's a global aspect with so many different varieties off of that. topics. And the activism comes with bringing people outside of the box thinking, um, I mean, sustainability and it in a term, you would think on energy consumption, you probably think on circularity of products on materiality in raw material sourcings, but you rarely would think on Putting a focus on people on ethical aspects, you would really think on putting maybe inclusion or accessibility aspect into things and corporate social responsibility is [00:11:00] part of the topics as well and make digital accessible to others who might not have the accessibility aspect now.

So all of that brings it in the home. Well, let's, let's maybe just dig into the relationship between sustainability and, and it in some detail then. And I believe at the moment you're at Allianz technology. Okay. Correct. That's my current employer. Still, um, as we've said in the, in the beginning, this will change during the year.

So I decided to get a bit on the other side of the table. So the big enterprise world, which is now for 27 years, my home is in particular now in the last three years, I'm very much putting pressure on their suppliers. And the majority of those suppliers are small, medium sized companies. So the SME world, which is very much overwhelmed now with regulatories, with laws, with all the big enterprises putting pressure on them.

Um, and there is very little people really helping them on a tangible way. So, um, what I'm very much interested in is now trying to support those. And my activism part is now meant to scale and that scale [00:12:00] effect will mostly come with making the experience of the past now accessible for those in the SME world.

And the SME world is often one that is forgotten, but without it, things don't work. Yeah, it is the backbone of most economies and builds most supply chains and everything else. But yeah, we don't talk about enough. And is there enough support for me? You're absolutely right about the regulation burden for a small company can be a very expensive thing, and it can mean the difference between a company's survival and a company's collapse.

So like the idea of this Area of our community in business needs more help because they want to do it the probably motivate to do it they need to do it because that's what the consumers expect but the big corporate over the top is stifling them or putting just too much burden on them. Well i don't know if it's too much burden they need to put that i mean that the thing is if there is the big enterprises who are driving and pushing and being on the front row.

Um, if if they don't have the pressure created on their suppliers, if I take the example of [00:13:00] Allianz Technology where I'm right now, if I take Siemens where I used to work for more than 10 years before, 80 percent 90 percent in particular in I. T. Is coming from suppliers. So it's very little, which is still in own operations, very little, which is still done by themselves.

There is most of the things in cloud or as a service. devices to service hardware as a service. So all of that requires suppliers. And so on the majority of now getting into the scope into the emission perspective off of it and environmental things, scope three makes 90 percent or even more of most companies nowadays of the big enterprises and scope three, therefore, has a direct relationship with the suppliers.

Another angle, not only on energy consumption, but human rights treatments. If you look into the supply chain, um, I mean, the, the product sourcing, the product development, the product in its whole treatment, even in the end of life of end user recruitment, for example,

is is mostly on supplier side and suppliers treatment.

So it's very little companies who are doing that on themselves. So now the [00:14:00] question is, is it a burden? Yes, it is for sure. But it needs to be there because otherwise we won't change the thing. Otherwise we still make just that enterprises appearing green and sustainable because they're in their own operations might be, but the majority is still like it used to be.

And then we do not have any kind of an opportunity to really improve our current situation. Yeah, yeah, well, let's let's return for a second then back to the relationship between climate activism and Sustainability and corporate social responsibility in an IT to your point. It's not just one thing a holistic perspective is required that that includes things like human rights, social engagement, societal impact.

You just, let's dig into that a little bit and maybe just using your current brief, where you are at Allianz, just sort of expand on that and just help us understand how all of the components could and should come together. Yeah. Thank you very much for the question, [00:15:00] first of all, and with pleasure.

digging a bit further into the overall topic. So as I've started about four and a half years back, the first definition which I came along with had been focusing on footprint and on handprint. So what is the own footprint of it? And where is things able to be improved? And and where's energy maybe I'm being more efficiently been used and stuff.

The second aspect had been The handprints of various it various digitalization supporting any kind of environmental or sustainability oriented topics. What I immediately found out is, well, all of that is very technical, very much defined on a science based situation, and it needs to be, but it does not create the passion and the emotions and the purpose of people to really get them involved.

And now, in particular, we know T. We do have a tendency that we just get called whenever there is something wrong. So I T. People do not get any kind off a phone call, which is Hey, everything is working perfectly smooth today. Thank you for that. No, it doesn't happen. And the thing is, um, what we need to have then is [00:16:00] if there is a additional aspect coming along with and that's exactly what I do.

Let's be honest. The whole thing is a transformation and transformation needs. I mostly compare that with cyber security key. First of all, awareness of people need, they, they need to understand what is the background of that. And secondly, they need to involve that. And literally everybody needs to involve that into the daily activities into operational roles into their day to day work.

And that does not come just with science or with theory or with very, very simple things. topical, just talking on things, it requires emotions. And that emotions is what led to the third pillar, which is the heart print and heart print. Well, if you Google that term, it doesn't exist. But heart print, focusing on the footprint and the handprint is something which is with heart creating something for the societal aspects, for example, which is all about donations, all about volunteering, all about social activities.

And that as a whole is something which I now have been able to implement in Allianz as well in the Allianz technology. So you've got a three pillar, the footprint, [00:17:00] the handprint and the heartprint. Just work backwards from that. So you described to us how the heartprint works and how it is much more of an emotionally engaging hook for people to get involved in.

How do you denote the footprint and the handprint? So the footprint and the handprint is literally looking in a very much technical way into, for example, cloudification. How can I just reduce the energy consumption of my own systems? It's about green coding principles. How can I reduce the amount of data which has been used in applications?

It looks into web pages. So how can I just make everything which has been shown less harmful in regard of data? Because that section of it is, is like the more familiar, right? The correct. I mean, certainly things like. Processing power and amount of power. The data centers use all of that kind of stuff. I think things like coding differently and having green approaches to coding is becoming a bigger conversation now.

It, it perhaps wasn't where it should have been a year ago. Absolutely. So the, the green coding principles and, and those aspects of very much now [00:18:00] in the center of everyone. Um, and it does make sense. I mean, actually, if you look into coding and application development, this already did focus quite some time on performance of the application and on usability.

So UX is something which is quite quite standard. And to enhance that now with the perspective on green coding on reducing energy is something which is very much on hand. And an additional aspect which kicks in here is Meanwhile, the typical classical coding like I learned it about 25 years ago is gone.

We mostly use no code or low code. And that comes again with a price. So it's a bit similar like the AI discussions. So low code and no code does make things quicker and very much more easy. So the development is very much faster, the cycles are very much shorter. But on the other side, local no code comes with templates with parts of code, which even if they're not being used or required, are being put into the application.

And therefore, this is one of the examples where a [00:19:00] green code in principle, a guideline or a functional rule, for example, does make sense to just screen the application after it's been finally developed and approved. Whether there is parts of the code, which could be just simply removed to make it just smaller and smoother, and that leads then that's the positive aspect of that, not only to a reduction of energy consumption and data transmission, but mostly increases the performance even further, because if the small the code has been smaller, And the application gets faster and it's a it's interesting a skill that used to exist in computing where resources were expensive and scarce.

So everybody had to show that they were highly efficient with the processing. Then compute went everywhere and we got lazy. And now it's relearning that skill of efficiency really counts because if your algorithm executes 10 million times an hour and you can eat 20 percent performance out of that, that's a massive difference in processing cost.

You sound nostalgic. I am. I'm thinking back with rose tinted glasses on the, on, on the days where C was [00:20:00] the language that everybody used to use and you had to dynamically, um, or sorry, allocate your own memory. I don't think I've seen you smile so widely for a long time. It's Friday, Dave. It's, uh, reminiscing on the past.

It's always a good way to do it. Yeah, maybe, maybe if I may, I can give you another example, which goes a bit in a similar direction. That's the aspect of digital inclusion or accessibility in ergonomics. In a lot of companies, UX, UI and accessibility is very close to each other, or even part of the same division or the same chapter.

And that comes with a reason the accessibility of products now just Giving a bit of a perspective on that, there will be a law, which comes from the European Commission, the

so called European Accessibility Act, which will get into place in 2025, mid 2025. So it's just about a bit more than a year to go.

The thing is, um, UX and UI is something which we already had a focus on since quite some time. And now it's just a bit bit of an enhancement to make it accessible, [00:21:00] not just for those who are able to see or to just make use of applications in the standard way which which we are focusing on, but just enhancing that and make it inclusive, make it accessible for everyone.

And that's, I think, it's just another another angle. Which comes quite easily because it's not just completely new. It's nothing which is artificially attached or edit. It is something which is most of the development, um, um, aspects already somehow there, it's just, it's just, it's just, it's just being precise with them.

So footprint, then the more sort of. Traditionally well understood areas of sustainability and technology. Tell us about handprint. So if you'd like to, to translate, I mean, we're talking on sustainability slash on ESG, so environmental, social and governance, the footprint and the handprint are mostly the E part and a bit of enhancement with the governmental part for sure, because of reporting topics and talking about reporting.

This is where the handprint comes very much into game, big enterprises. And I've been working, as I already mentioned in [00:22:00] two within the last 12 years now, they do most of the reporting, which is required. So non financial reporting like CSRD, so the corporate sustainability reporting directive, if they doing that.

Mostly in a manual way. So a lot of data is being collected out of invoices collected out of emails or stored in Excel sheets stored somewhere in online drives, and then been put into reporting systems. And that is a huge effort. I mean, if you take the amount and the circle, of reportings, which now comes across the amount of KPIs you need to fulfill.

Um, in big enterprises, this is just giving, in our case, at the moment in Allianz, about 100 persons twice per year, weeks in which they don't do anything else. But that right thing is reporting and CSRD and all those, this is required. I'm a huge fan of regulatories, because we need to have standards defined, we need to find ways how to drive things further.

But on the other side, is that helping us is that protecting ourselves? Is that helping to support towards a more [00:23:00] sustainable future? No, it's not. In reality, this is just a view into the mirror. And the S is of data. So what we need to have is technical solutions, automation, or any kind of Reducing the effort for those people who do have the expertise to influence our future.

And if we do have abilities, and this is the handprint aspect through digitalization, through it, to automate data collection, to create a single source of truth of data, to bring data into reporting systems are mostly manual and just have validation steps. Then for those who are the experts, we can just free them the time.

And if I can just release the amount of working hours by 60, 70, or 80%, and this is valid numbers, through digitalization, that 80 percent of time can be used to influence them in the future and just reduce the energy consumption further to introduce any kind of circularity products, just as a couple of examples.

Right. And it's like, uh, to implement the sort of monitoring and measuring and reporting Processes and systems that you're talking about [00:24:00] can be a really very significant endeavor, right? And it seems to me that technology itself is probably going to get into a point where it can really support the level of, you know, kind of IOT that would be required

and the level of network coverage that would be required.

And then the level of data science and potentially AI that's going to need to be involved to track the sustainability of it. And the carbon footprint of a very large scale organization. So are you seeing any innovation in this space that is, you know, going to maybe not there in the next six months, but maybe in 18 months.

What are the big steps forward? Do you think in in this space? I absolutely agree with what you said. And I would just add not just in particular for the big enterprises, but take the smaller months, which we already spoke about a bit earlier. So SMEs mostly do not have Um, the staff, they do not have the expertise, 120 people who are working on environmental things.

So they need to have support. They need to have technical solutions in place, which [00:25:00] are helping them and making things easier to achieve. And with that in mind, I don't know if we need to have a couple of years in front of us. I think there is, um, in particular, the, um, artificial intelligence areas. There is startups popping like mushrooms at the moment, which is coming up with in particular focus on sustainability, real solutions.

So if you take ratings, for example, so there is big questionnaires, which you need to fill as enterprises to be rated in eco bodies or CDP, which is the standard sustainability ratings, which do make sense for sure. And you need to repeat that once per year. But filling out that questionnaire takes you weeks of time.

And there is in the meantime, an application or a couple of solutions on the market, which are already there, which can just grab those data, which is required to answer those questions out of your existing published sustainability reportings. And that is reducing the effort 60 70%. You have to validate for sure.

And you need to have that a double checking, but it is not that you have to each and every single question search for the answer in your [00:26:00] 165 pages sustainability report and copy them into then that questionnaire. So this is just one example, and there will be plenty more. And I mean, now, if it comes to quality of data, you've said that a bit earlier as well, we need to find answers to make the data more reliable already at the sourcing and then at the reporting stages as well.

The more accurate those data are, the more we are able to find answers. to just, um, involve that and, and, um, have some kind of a change to those things. And the, um, accuracy of data, the quality of data, this is something where I'm pretty sure technology will help. So when you look at the current state of play, whether it be current governance processes that are being put in place around this, whether, whether it be legal or CSR related and the supporting tech in the way that you've just been describing it, how far away from, A good level of maturity.

Do you think we are like as a society and as a set of organizations to be, to really have our arms around this problem in a way that's, [00:27:00] you know, non tokenistic. So we're actually measuring the right things and working out how to get into action on them. I think we are not that bad as we might think of the current situation is that most companies or in enterprises in particular, and we in it, we mostly tend to achieve the 100%.

I do have a theory, which is 8020 might be sufficient as well, because the last 20 percent is pretty hard to achieve. And the question is, how much more are we able to get with doing 100 percent instead of 80%. So yeah. And I'm from from my own perspective and my own experience, I'm sure that we are very close to the 80 percent already.

Now the only thing is we need to find standards and define those standards to make things

comparable and not have apples and oranges. The thing is, at the moment, in particular in it, There is very little standardization, there's very little ways and algorithms which are being defined. I mean, Germany, for example, is very much known for ISO and a lot of other certifications, you can think of [00:28:00] in a positive or negative way, what I think is, it needs to have such kind of standards that you're able to to compare things with each other and to find ways, which is the better way to go to and identify those.

And if there is everybody coming now from different angles and different algorithms, and one company is doing a conversion from dollars or euros or spent based methodologies, another one is using science from, I don't know, 10 years ago, and some kind of conversion factors from, I don't know, the US in specific with a local conversion factor.

Some others are doing it on a more global perspective. And it is quite hard or even impossible to compare and to really come up with a, an answer to which is the more sustainable solution. And this is one of the aspects, I think. And I think that's, there's, there's a, there's going to be a focus that rises, especially on the big ISVs that writes the world software that processes to push them.

To be able to demonstrate how sustainable their solutions are. And we go back to the coding efficiency point and everything else. But there's some very large software suppliers that, you know, most [00:29:00] companies will use to a degree. Pressure needs to go on there because it's so populous in our compute environment that.

There's got to be huge potential. We think that when you think about all the user interface add ons and the things and the high end graphics, have we actually had the optimization cycle to say, is it as efficient as it needs to be? Because we've chased functionality, and I think I. S. V. S. will come under increasing pressure, especially as the large corporates press to say we're going to change our software selection because they're more sustainable and we can save 20 percent of CO2 if we use them, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, in that area.

Well, I mean, I'd be interested in your view on that. Yeah, which is a very much a perfect example. I couldn't have said that better. Thanks for that. The, the aspect of procurement and the standards there is something which, um, I think the companies, the producers, the vendors, all of them, they do have a quite huge interest to standardize because on the other side, the big enterprises like us, like Allianz, like Siemens, um, like I don't know, take them.

They are all, [00:30:00] raising questions. And this is more or less on a day to day basis. So there is plenty of people now working in the big vendors, and the ISPs who do literally nothing else but answering those questions. And each and every single time, the question might come up in a little different angle with a different wording with a little bit of a different perspective.

And they need to answer that mostly manual. So the standardization. does even help that. And I mean, if I now I'm a huge fan, and I just said that I think a bit in the preparation on that call, I'm on one hand board member and the chief sustainability officer of sustainable it. org, which is a non financial non governmental, which has the objective to define exactly it sustainability standards, for example, on coding, on social aspects on governmental aspects, And share that openly with others.

And there is examples like TSI, which has been started from several different companies, even vendors had been included. And this is to define a procurement standard for sustainable it and shared open source as well. So therefore, I think there is plenty of [00:31:00] different examples which Honestly spoken, three, four, five years ago, I never would have thought that would be possible that there is big customers, big enterprises

working together with vendors with distribution systems and with warehouses to define a standard, which is then literally giving all of them, at least at the beginning, maybe even a bad reputation, or at least a poor perspective at first hand.

But I mean, I think everybody did understand in the meantime, that we have to change and that we have to influence that. And the more active you are, the better it will be for you on the long run.

We've talked a lot about good practices in this space over the course of the last half an hour in this conversation. I wonder if you could maybe give us an idea of some organizations you've seen, maybe not naming organizations, but where they're not getting this right. And that might give us access to, you know, kind of what other organizations could do to improve their current reporting or their current CSR stands.

Well, [00:32:00] I won't point to any particular company because at the end, everybody is on a journey and we are all trying our very much best. There is all people behind that. So as much as a brand, as much as an enterprise or a company might have a philosophy or a character, And the people working in those areas and environmental responsible persons, all of us, we're doing that for the purpose of the better and for the good, and not just for doing green washing to the outside world.

So this is what I would see as a theory. But take the example of smartphones and the right to repair. This is a thing which has been discussed quite recently. And what we see is the big brands and the no ones They do come up with somehow solutions. Is that a real answer? From my point of view, it's not there is small companies.

And this is at least two on the market, which are in the meantime, even able to deal with big enterprises. Fairphone to name just one of them. Fairphone is able to just send out a QR code, you can just order any kind of spare part, [00:33:00] including the battery. online. It's been shipped to your home when the battery is lacking, which mostly happens after two to three years to smartphones, which we have in heavy business use.

You can just easily exchange that by yourself. It is nothing where you have to go to a shop, to a store, you not have to pay 150 euros for the maintenance part, have to give it away from you. No, just do that literally at home. And this is something where I think there is already a good way. And there is already some answers to those questions.

And this could be something where I think. The big brands could orient a bit further more on. I know from discussions that they come up with durability and, and if you just exchange the better yourself, then it's not water resistant anymore. And this could just shorten the life cycle. But well, is that an excuse?

Is that an answer? I don't know. That's a very good example on where nation states need to legislate. To shift the dial and force that because you're absolutely right. The impact of the whole device having to go away or the cost associated with compared to a modular [00:34:00] concept or an easier way to do it.

Yeah. Okay. You might lose waterproofing or whatever else, but I just actually dropped my phone the other day in a, in the bath. So, uh, I was pleased. It was waterproof. It was either I dropped my glass of champagne on my phone. Yeah, no, I saved the right one. But yeah, but it's that point where is there's a balance between large corporates need to do all the things that you're talking about and be better at it.

But I do think this is that's an excellent example of where nation states just legislate and say it's illegal to sell a device which doesn't have, you know, the ability to repair at home. And

maybe giving you a bit of emotion, like we fed it a bit earlier, um, from our past, if you think back, we all grew up with devices, computers, which had been the ability to upgrade.

So I can still remember just putting new graphic cards into my computer or doing with a new CPU and new RAM, a next step to the next, I don't know, computer game, which came across, which required more performance. Nowadays, if you just [00:35:00] look at the devices we're all working together with, this is completely one thing.

You're not even able to open the battery or anything else. Anything is possible. You just simply can't do anything and that's something where we have to get back. So I'm not the person looking backwards all the time and saying always, The past had been better than the, the, um, the future or the actual situation.

No, not at all, but this in that regard, we, I think, have to rethink what we've done already good in the past and come back towards that angle.

Ryan, thank you so much for sharing those thoughts with us today and your insights and giving us a structure by which to think a bit more broadly about corporate social responsibility and, and, and aspects of green ops going forward. Thank you so much for, for giving me the opportunity and, and I'm really much thrilled to just have such kind of a broader audience [00:36:00] being hopefully a bit of, of inspired with the thoughts and with the ideas.

Very good. Now we end every episode of this podcast by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. And that could be, you've got something exciting to do at the weekend, like a great restaurant you've got booked, or it could be something in your professional life. So Rainer, what are you excited about doing next?

Thank you for that question. A very much short term thing I'm looking very much forward to is spring is arriving here in, in the Munich rural district where I'm living. I'm sorry, I'm very much excited to getting outside into the garden. So I'm balancing my Business life, um, a bit with digging my hand in, in soil and dirt.

Um, so this is what I'm mostly doing on the weekends. Now preparing my garden, getting everything ready for spring on the midterm or longterm basis, I'm really looking forward, um, as I've already mentioned a bit to leave the enterprise world and start my own business and that own business will be, and I now have the exclusive way to tell you.

And this is the first time I'm releasing that, um, my company will be named Um, and with hard print, we're going [00:37:00] to influence the small, medium sized companies and give them the experience and give them the thoughts with a tangible way. Real solutions on a real level, which they are requiring to get future ready.

So the future readiness is part of the business. And this is what I am very much thrilled to. So I'm now in the preparation phase and founding the company and defining the portfolio. So this is all right now going on over the weekend and in the next couple of weeks. So I'm really looking forward to that.

Well, we wish you a great deal of luck with that. I think you're, you're targeting a big need in the market, I think is what we, uh, we talked about in the main conversation today that SMEs are going to need help with this. You know, it's complex. It's complex. Now, I'm also very glad to get out of the winter myself.

It's been a weird winter, hasn't it? Extremely wet. Yeah, it's just rained, hasn't it? Just pretty much constant as it, as it, as it rained a lot in Munich. It did. It did. Um, unfortunately, if you look more to the South, um, so Spain or Portugal, it did not, it was the opposite way around.

It’s very much, I’m, I’m [00:38:00] really lucky that we had that rain.

I do feel you just from an emotional perspective, it did not help. So my sauna kept running over the winter time on every second day because of that. That was my only positive pointing to that, but I agree with you. It was a real wet winter and special one. Yeah. Well, we’re all on the spring, eh? True.

Absolutely true. So a huge thanks to our guest this week, Rainer. Thank you so much for being on the show. Thanks to our baffeling producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We’re on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven’t already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

See you in another reality next week [00:39:00] week.

About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2023 global revenues of €22.5 billion.

Get the future you want | www.capgemini.com

Capgemini