**Let My People Go Surfing” – 8 philosophies from Patagonia for your business.**

**29 Mar 2016**

“Let My People Go Surfing” by Yvon Chouinard is the story of US outdoor clothing and equipment company Patagonia, long regarded as a global pioneer in sustainability. Ahead of its time, Patagonia has always put purpose before profit and has remained true to its values, despite phenomenal growth.

Core to Patagonia’s success are eight philosophies, which are an expression of the company’s values. Written to guide the business through the process of designing, manufacturing and selling clothing, they are guidelines to the company’s approach and are communicated to every employee.

Yvon Chouinard writes, “In every long-lasting business, the methods of conducting business may constantly change, but the values, the culture, and the philosophies remain constant”.

Patagonia’s philosophies can be applied to other businesses – perhaps they will provide inspiration for your organisation.

1. **Environmental philosophy**

Action is the basis for the environmental philosophy at Patagonia. “Since our main reason for being in business is to work on changing the way governments and corporations ignore our environmental crisis, action is absolutely necessary,” says Chouinard.

The company’s environmental action began in the 1970s by trying to prevent physical damage to the rock walls of Yosemite. An essay about ‘clean climbing’ (climbing without changing the rock) was included in the annual product catalogue. This marked the start of a number of campaigns communicated through catalogues. Over the years others have included a call to vote for the environment and to stop buying unnecessary products – the [‘Don’t Buy This Jacket’](http://www.patagonia.com/email/11/112811.html) campaign. In fact, only 55 per cent of Patagonia’s catalogues are devoted to products: 45 per cent are devoted to conveying messages and campaigns.

* Briefly summarize the philosophy for your classmates in your post.
* Outline how this philosophy supports the values articulated by the author in the History section of the book.
* What challenges do you expect that Patagonia is having, and/or will be having in the future, in maintaining this philosophy?
* What would you suggest that the leaders of Patagonia do to stay on course and sustain alignment to their values?