

An interview with [Person A] on the Water Blueprint

This felt good. It's been a while since I talked about this, and I can feel it boiling inside. There was this cycle where everyone would really feed off the enthusiasm of each other, and that was absolutely great.

Q: How did you get involved with the Water Blueprint?

In 2017, [company] organized the first Sustainability Academy in partnership with Erb Institute at the University of Michigan, and [company] reached out to several internal businesses and stakeholders, so they could propose projects for sub-teams for that first cohort to work on. One of them was aligned with the Leading the Blueprint goal. The work that started there was to come up with a Water Blueprint.

That's how I got involved, and I got very very excited with that project, so after our project with the Sustainability Academy was finished, I was invited to join the steering team for the Water Blueprint. Within the steering team, I continued to work on the vision that we had for the Water Blueprint, and we came up with explaining the Water Blueprint through case studies. It involved reaching out to the different stakeholders of each of the stories that we wanted to showcase and putting together a map of the relevant stakeholders external to [company] that we wanted to make our work visible to. In 2018, we presented our work in the World Water Forum, and we continued to work on other fronts of Blueprints. Ex. Carbon emissions, future of work, but really the one I was involved with from beginning to close was the one on Water.

Q: Have you been able to implement ideas and lessons from the Blueprint project into your [company] life post the academy?

I moved from an R&D role to a Commercial role, and a lot of the learnings that have to do with engaging with external parties and other stakeholders are something that I still carry with me. The customers we have need that sort of assessment from time to time, and it's very helpful to be familiar with how it works to be able to have that conversation.

Q: When you were working on the blueprints, what were the guidelines/processes to say it was ready?

I would say that no Blueprint is ever ready in the sense that it is a continuous state of doing things, a way of engaging with stakeholders, that our vision is aligned, and of ensuring we consistently continue to act in the ways that we believe are aligned to the Blueprint.

Now, when is it that you can actually launch this vision? I think it's a combination of finding a collection of relevant case studies, mapping what other companies are doing, how our own company fits in that space, how we can contribute, and what do we bring that is different. Another piece is including and working with the other stakeholders who are not companies like [company]: for instance, smaller companies, local communities, NGOs, government/associations – how are each of these engaging in the Water discussion? How can

we make sure that we participate in the right forums, so that not only is [company]'s voice is heard, but also that we can actually influence something?

We wanted it to be more than just a platform with abstract information and theoretical concepts about collaboration. That's why we wanted to add the case studies of actual work done by [company], which included links to tools that people could use to assess their own water blueprint project and reach out to other stakeholders – so the platform would already be contributing to support others to do their part on the Water Blueprint as well.

Once we had all of this figured out, that's when we were able to have enough content to put on the webpage. After reviews and approvals, you click submit and make it public.

Q: Do you have a favorite moment of working with the Water Blueprint?

The work really, I think we had the same level of engagement and passion on the team. There was this cycle where everyone would really feed off the enthusiasm of each other and that was absolutely great. Just the way we were trying to convey that you have to engage with all of the parties. It has to be collaborative work. You have to understand each party's perspective and understand the impact.

I can remember several hands-on sessions where we were just on a roll and the ideas were feeding off each other. We started with not having something concrete to begin with, then two hours later (and it was a virtual meeting still), everybody was just so passionate that it ended up with everyone like "Whoa, now we have a better view of what we want to do!"

To see what [Person A]'s finished product looks like, visit [Sustainable Watershed Management | \[company\] Corporate](#).