

MANIFESTO

TECH ENTREPRENEUR AND SUSTAINABILITY PIONEER

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PREVIOUSLY

I have always dreamed of the future, travelling years ahead in my imagination. It's something I've done since I was a child, when I would invent things that didn't yet exist. I never stopped. I continue to live each day as if it was tomorrow, not today. It's innovation that drives me.

I believed in the Internet and the smart phone years before the World Wide Web became mainstream and Steve Jobs invented the iPhone. On the eve of the millennium, I founded a tech start-up.

I brought the fashion industry into the 21st century. I invented a business that didn't exist yet and I revolutionised the way we shop for clothes, long before anyone else. I guided a number of luxury brands in their first forays into digital, providing them with a roadmap to success and creating a tech culture in an industry that didn't have one. The New York Times defined me as 'The man who put fashion on the net'.

I always thought global. From day one, the business I built was international. I then became the first in fashion e-commerce to secure three significant joint ventures: one in the United Arab Emirates and one in China, each with the biggest players in the regions, Mohamed Alabbar and Alibaba, and one with the French luxury group Kering.

I always put the customer first, just like other big tech players like Amazon, Google and Netflix, I understood that the business and its employees' focus and obsession, had to be the customer: their needs, their satisfaction, their happiness.

I created the first and only Italian unicorn, and then I bought its English competitor, NET-A-PORTER, creating a world-leading Group with 4.5 million customers and 5000 employees. At the height of the business' success, I sold it for 6 billion dollars to Richemont, one of the world's leading luxury groups.

I pioneered the use of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and 3D visuals in the industry, and I've been called a dataphile for the skills and innovation that I have brought into both my business and the sector.

I understood already in 2009 that sustainability would soon have to become our focus, not just in fashion, but in every business and society. The creation of YOOXYGEN, the Ecobox, the YOOXMIRROR virtual dressing room with personalised avatar, the Digital ID, YOOX NET-A-PORTER's sustainability strategy Infinity and the green policies across the Group's locations; these initiatives demonstrate the Group's desire to work in a responsible way as a leader in the circular economy.

I decided that robots are our friends and that we must create a new balance between technology and human creativity. Achieving an equilibrium is the key to this symbiotic relationship.

I met His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and proposed a project, The Modern Artisan, that became a blueprint for the creation of a new profession and a new type of sustainable luxury.

I have always advocated for gender equality and inclusion, ensuring that women took on over 50% of roles in the business, including in top management. I am a founding member of the Champions of Change Global Technology Group, which works to promote gender equality in the tech sector.

UP NEXT

I will continue to dream, as I always have done. I will use my experience to create a vision for the next 20 years.

I will continue to look to the future, to live in the future and to innovate in whatever sector I find myself in.

I will develop new projects linked to sustainability. It is now evident that in order to imagine new worlds and new systems, we have to put nature, respect for the environment and a better use of resources at the heart of everything we do. Biodiversity, the safeguarding of the oceans, reforestation, bringing an end to global warming: these have all become urgent priorities for every country, business and individual.

One of the first acts Joe Biden made as President was signing America back on to the Paris Climate Agreement.

On September 25th 2015 the governments of 193 member states of the United Nations approved the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It is made up of 17 Sustainable Development Goals across environmental, economic and social areas by 2030. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, annual investment requirements across all sectors have been estimated at around \$7 trillion.

In the last couple of years young people around the world, led by Greta Thunberg, have demanded to be listened to and have dreamed of a new green world.

As an objective of Next Generation EU, the EU has given every member country a path towards a green economy, with a reconversion of energy sources and the production of goods with transparent and regulated supply chains.

Fashion, the second most polluting industry in the world, is considering how to achieve the United Nations' objectives within 2030. Some steps have been made, but there is still a long journey ahead.

I will work as the Champion of His Royal Highness's Sustainable Markets Initiative Task Force on Fashion. Together we will build a sustainable roadmap for the industry's big companies, according to the principles of the Terra Carta, recently launched by HRH.

I will propose The Modern Artisan project as a blueprint for what fashion can do to become circular and responsible. This project holds the key to my vision of respecting nature and the use of innovation, data and technology to help the environment and the next generation. It could be replicated by other businesses that care about both the planet and young people.

I will share how I started on my green journey more than ten years ago. Many entrepreneurs and young start-uppers don't know how to go about building a responsible business that respects the environment. They need concrete examples of what they can create, what they can do and how they can understand best practice to achieve a positive environmental and social impact.

I will use my experience in data, technology and artificial intelligence to promote a New Era where robots and humans work together to make our planet a better place. The environment needs data with its ability to recognise and predict patterns, and machines that are ever more evolved thanks to machine learning, in order to create a modern, innovative path, where young people can find their space and their calling to create the world they dream about. The pandemic has only accelerated this need to digitise. I have used data and robots in the last twenty years and have the experience needed to propose a technological path for business and start-ups that want to achieve the right mix between machine and human creativity.

I will continue to dedicate myself to training and supporting the next generations. I will broaden my mentorship programme for young entrepreneurs from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in the industry and I will continue to work with universities to speak with students and help them find their path in life. I will explain to them how important technology and sustainability are for anyone who wants to create a successful start-up and adapt to the 21st century. I will show them that it is impossible to innovate without making mistakes, even to the point of failure, but that if an idea doesn't seem impossible it can be even more likely to fail.

I will always continue to incentivize the presence of girls and women in the tech arena and their inclusion at all levels of the corporate structure. I will continue to take care of the community. I will put all my efforts into promoting and develop "Digitali e Uguali", an initiative I created with Gruppo GEDI and Fondazione Golinelli to diminish Italy's digital divide. My goal is to secure a laptop for every girl and boy in order to allow them to attend home schooling and give them the opportunity to evolve personally and professionally.

Where do I see myself in five years' time? On the sustainable and innovative supersonic XB 1 airplane that travels from Tokyo to Seattle in just 4.30 hours.

I see a new world that is being born, where each of us can save the planet through technology. I want to play a part in this Fourth Industrial Revolution, where innovation, sustainability, new inventions and the next generation will lead the way.