



Infosys creates a win-win-win for itself, clients, and sustainability



WINNER: SUSTAINABILITY

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The Situation: Infosys was early to recognize climate change as an existential threat—before it became unavoidable. Now it has ambitions to lead more than the tech and services industry; it wants to lead on a global scale through networks, universities, and governments. Sustainability in Infosys has grown from internal efforts in 2008 into an increasingly powerful and proven sustainability services portfolio.

Infosys expects its entire workforce to deliver sustainability services by 2025, aligning its capability across consulting, technology, and business services to provide sustainability services as distinct client offerings and a native portfolio element. Its strategy aims to bring the entire Infosys machine toward the global sustainability context of decarbonizing and addressing all 17 UN Goals covering sustainability's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) elements. Infosys has an increasingly leading role in global networks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Ellen McArthur Foundation, partnerships with academia (MIT, for example), and multiple government-level engagements.

But this all started as an internal initiative. The Infosys organization has a handle on its sustainability, and it is combining this experience with its services. The whole tech and service industry must take note. Much of the industry is playing catch-up (see our separate [Ecosystem Mapping study](#)). Infosys has quadrupled its employee count since 2008 from 50,000 to more than 290,000 in 2021, and it has expanded its global presence to 53 countries—boosting its responsibility to sustainability and its influence and opportunity.

Infosys' overall leadership across internal, client-facing, and ecosystem sustainability means it is a worthy winner of the Sustainability category of the HFS OneOffice™ Awards. Infosys is a firm to watch in 2022 and beyond, with sustainability set to dominate the agenda of all organizations for the next half-century. Infosys has a clear strategy to leverage its consulting, technology, and services for the sustainability journeys its clients must make. It also has the platform and partnerships to help set the standard throughout industries and ecosystems.

The Solution and the Results: Infosys' internal sustainability efforts have kept pace with its business growth

Having achieved carbon neutrality in 2020 across its value chain in part by optimizing its assets and switching to renewable energy sources, Infosys now hopes to positively impact 80 million lives by 2025 and invest heavily in efforts to restore biodiversity, particularly in locations where it operates.

While most enterprises are scrambling to optimize their real estate, Infosys developed its properties before the onset of COVID-19 with technologies (often referred to as “smart building” initiatives, including the internet of things [IoT] and analytics as core features) that made buildings safe and efficient (saving both cost and emissions). It repurposed these technologies during the pandemic alongside other adaptations to improve air quality. More broadly, buildings and the built environment (cities, specific spaces, etc.) are a key focus for Infosys’s sustainability efforts, given their environmental and broader sustainability impacts. Infosys also applies this focus on its buildings, the services it delivers to clients, and in its published thought leadership.

By mid-2022, all Infosys sites must have internal and external commitments to sustainability. These sites have already been given the toolkits, but they haven’t all received enforced metrics yet. All of Infosys’ engineering sites already have such metrics in place.

Infosys is also leaning on education as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. The intent is to develop both life skills and technical skills to expand options for communities. More than two million users are learning on the Infosys Wingspan platform. Another CSR effort includes more than 120,000 families now leveraging low-tech solutions to generate methane gas for cooking. On the social element of sustainability (the S in ESG), Infosys has increased the proportion of women on its board to 22%. I’m sure Infosys and all of us would agree there’s a lot of progress to be made throughout the industry and most any organization across all forms of diversity.

The Bottom Line: It's about external sustainability.
While Infosys and many other tech and services firms have achieved impressive internal sustainability standards, their biggest impact and opportunity is in helping their clients and partners achieve the same through consulting, technology, and business services—but it won't be straightforward.

Infosys has developed several sustainability-focused partnerships, including with The Economist to coordinate global sustainability networks, MIT, the World Economic Forum, Ellen McArthur Foundation, Microsoft, and, finally, bp, where joint solutions (energy-as-a-service is one example) and dedicated co-innovation centers hope to position Infosys at the forefront of the energy transition away from fossil fuels. Infosys is crafting a services portfolio across strategic sustainability design, decarbonization, smart spaces, sustainable product lifecycle management for a circular economy, smart finance, and carbon offset advisory. It has built proprietary tools and platforms, including the EcoWatch platform. Patents and pending IP include Radiflux for radiant cooling technology, Retroshade for window shade technology, and Robocleaner for automated solar panel cleaning technology.

However, brand perception is a critical hurdle for all tech and services firms to overcome to achieve the level of influence over sustainability we desperately need them to. Our perception data at HFS Research suggests awareness and high satisfaction in the market across most consulting, tech, and business services firms for sustainability. However, there remains a perception gap across the ecosystem (see the [Ecosystem Mapping study](#) for more information) in certain circles that these firms indeed have the capability that they're proving to us; this is changing rapidly, but there's work to do. The starting point needs to be more conversations with existing clients to expand the application of consulting, tech, and services capabilities toward sustainability outcomes and problem solving. The work tech and services firms are already doing is earning them a seat in critical sustainability partnerships with NGOs, global networks, and many other organizations. This will help spread best practices, as will aligned narratives of how existing capability fits under the global context of sustainability. We need tech and services firms to convince the market to help it meet this global context. Quickly.

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Josh Matthews is a Practice Leader at HFS, based in Cambridge, UK. Josh leads HFS's coverage of sustainability and the energy and utilities industries, built on academic and industry expertise across chemical engineering, management, and sustainability. Josh also focuses on supply chain, the TMT (telecom, media, and technology) industry, and the HFS Triple-A Trifecta of automation, analytics, and AI segments. Other subjects of interest and coverage include quantum computing and diversity and inclusion (D&I). Previously, he has covered the internet of things (IoT) and manufacturing.



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