

Case collection -

Future *Now*

DDC

What can we do to prepare our businesses for a future of uncertainty? How do we create adaptive and innovative businesses — the kind that doesn't just survive massive change, but learns from it and comes out stronger? How can we rewire how we think about the future, get away from simply reacting, and take on a new approach that allows us to spot new opportunities and proactively shape the future as we want it?

When a crisis like COVID-19 hits, it becomes apparent how uncertain the future is. Danish companies have to be extremely adaptable. Currently, production companies are facing more than just a pandemic — they are facing societies, markets, and customers that demand action on immense planetary and societal challenges. Whether they want to or not, this might force them to rethink not only their products and services but their entire business- and operating models as well. How can companies proactively engage with the challenges of the future and identify its inherent opportunities?

What is Future Now?

As the title of the program implies, Future Now is a design-driven business and strategy development program intended for Danish production companies interested in working proactively with the future. The program bridges long-term and systemic thinking with the rapid and iterative ways of working and includes content spanning from speculative future scenarios, to prototyping, to design-driven leadership practices.

Future Now is funded by The Danish Industry Foundation, which has granted 18 Danish companies the opportunity to participate in the three-month program. Through the program, participants engage in continuous one-on-one sparring with leading experts and a series of intensive boot camps on working with the future, on conceptualizing and prototyping new solutions, and embedding these new ways of working in the organization with future-proof practices.

During the three-month course, program experts and mentors touch on various aspects that are critical for building a sustainable and future-proof business. As part of the process, the companies are challenged to work in-depth with new experimental approaches that provide them with the acquired tools and methods to look at the future from a new perspective and discover a range of new business opportunities. Part of this is a dedicated workshop focused on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals: By using **The Confederation of Danish Industry's tools**, the businesses map their current impact and examine what they can do to create further positive change in the world..

Following the course, the companies have achieved a variety of results. Some of them contain new concepts for products, test results, and implementation plans. Others include ideas and plans regarding how to either alter their business model, rethink their cultural values, or incorporate key learnings from Future Now into their next strategy. Despite the differences in results, all participants have emerged stronger and better prepared for a future that may be marked by uncertainty and new challenges.

The four cases

In this case collection, you will meet four of the 18 companies that participated in Future Now during 2021. As the companies span different disciplines, the collection of cases contains learning and perspectives from a wide range of industries, such as manufacturing, building, food production, and sustainable packaging.

You will meet the following companies: Glaspartner ApS, Orana ApS, Re-bag ApS, and Mouritsen ApS.

Case 01

Glaspartner

A Total Change
in Corporate Culture

About GLASPARTNER:

GLASPARTNER provides a wide range of glass solutions and glass products tailored to the needs and desires of their customers. This includes a variety of different types of glass, such as energy windows, solar control windows, safety windows, and sound-absorbing windows.

*Number of employees: 75
Founded: 2005*

Expertizing in customized glass solutions, GLASPARTNER delivers a wide range of customized products and services in a variety of requirements. Through participation in Future Now, the company has adopted a sustainable business strategy leading to a significant change in its corporate culture. A feat that was unexpected

Initially, **GLASPARTNER** participated in our project **Future Now** with the aim of finding new ways to design their production to ensure future relevance for their customers. Their basic approach was to think in production terms. However, they came out of the three-month program with a new stance on sustainability within the process industry.

Tools for the future

As a direct result of the program, GLASPARTNER has now implemented new tools that they actively utilize in their daily dialogue with customers:

A Catalog of SDGs: GLASPARTNER has created a catalog that breaks down each of the **17 UN global goals** into the sub-goals they can provide their customers. In this regard, the catalog serves as a dialogue-creation tool to simplify and enhance the creation of a green partnership between GLASPARTNER and its customers.

A Concrete Plan of Action: As a result of the catalog, GLASPARTNER now participates in important meetings with their customers when they discuss future green initiatives. In doing so, GLASPARTNER has evolved into being an active part of the product development process for their customers rather than just being a supplier.

According to Ib Madsen, CEO at GLASPARTNER, participating in Future Now has led them to a more proactive position in their customer relationship:

“We have come up with a more proactive approach. Actually, we have some level of influence on how we can affect our customers in a way that actually benefits us and our business. If we hadn’t participated in the Future Now program, we wouldn’t be here today, he says.

A strategic overhaul

Despite having worked on a few green initiatives before, GLASPARTNER found it difficult to incorporate them into its corporate strategy.

“We have not been able to solve the problem on our own. We have perhaps taken the green focus more as a duty than a desire. But in this process, we realized that maybe this has more potential than we initially thought,” Ib Madsen explains.



Participating in Future Now has given the company an overhaul that places them ahead of many other companies in the process industry. The shift in values has also influenced the way GLASPARTNER enters into new strategic collaborations with its customers. In addition, it has enabled them to identify which clients may fit into GLASPARTNER's evolving green strategy.

Due to their change in focus, GLASPARTNER has gained the lead over several larger companies that offer similar products to the same type of customers. Firstly, their new, sustainable focus provides their customers with goodwill. Additionally, it allows them to improve their customer relationships by assisting them in driving their own green agenda.

“Strategically, this means we are much closer to our customers. As a result, we expect, and we sense, a completely different loyalty, one that goes beyond being the cheapest, says Ib Madsen.

Ultimately, this has also led GLASPARTNER to the decision about hiring in-house climate specialists:

“I am convinced that the green focus is something that will benefit so many people, both directly and indirectly, that we clearly see advantages of hiring people with expert knowledge in this field,” Ib Madsen adds, pointing out that this change in culture actually makes them a pioneer within their field.

Insane future scenarios

Among many different tools, the Future Now program instructs the participating companies to use realistic future scenarios. And for GLASPARTNER, it was precisely these future scenarios that made the difference. They “forced” the company to think in new ways.

“When the scenarios were spoken aloud, they sounded completely insane and out of place. And since this was part of the process, we had to discuss them all. If we lived in those scenarios, we couldn’t just say ‘we don’t care’; we would have to figure out how to deal with them,” says CEO Ib Madsen, who expresses his particular enthusiasm for working within the framework of design thinking and the exercises they were exposed to.

In the past, GLASPARTNER would prefer to stay in the comfort zone and work with the most convenient tasks. This also applies to working with the SDG goals.

“ Previously, we may have looked at them briefly and said fine, let all the big companies mess with it. It's not something we have to deal with, because it's too fluffy, and it's too difficult for companies of our size.

But now, GLASPARTNER has reached a point where they are actively pursuing global goals and identifying which ones to prioritize, as well as enhancing the green agenda within the constraints of the process industry.



Case 02

Orana

A Plant-based Future
Calls for New Skills

About Orana:

Orana is a multinational company with extensive experience within the food & beverage industry. Based on natural fruit and plant-derived ingredients, the company produces tasteful products for the beverage, dairy, and baking industries around the world.

*Number of Employees: 430
Founded: 1984*

The Danish multinational company Orana operates within the food and beverage industry. Having participated in Future Now program, the company is now equipped with a suite of tools and perspectives that give them a competitive advantage in a market where plant-based foods are increasingly in demand

Orana produces and sells fruit-based raw materials and natural extracts to dairies, juice producers, and other food manufacturers. In essence, they create great taste. The company is currently in the process of entering a new market of plant-based products, but even a large and established company like Orana must learn new skills and work processes to attain this goal.

New collaborations

Participating in **Future Now** has provided the company with specific tools and methods that allow them to adapt to an increasingly plant-based future:

A plan for launching and prototyping a new product: A nutritious drink based on local fruits from Kenya. The product is intended for vulnerable groups worldwide, such as refugee camps or for children and young people in schools where adequate nutrition is necessary for the learning process.

Mapping future collaborations: e.g. with **DTU** (Denmark's Technical University) or similar institutions, should contribute to ensuring the technical knowledge behind the nutritional composition of the new product.

A specific tool for internal project collaborations: The 'basic assumptions' tool helps the company map future processes and action plans.

Along with these three major initiatives, participating in Future Now has given Orana a new perspective on themselves. A perspective they could never get from an external consultant, says Sia Oskarson, Director, Fruit Based Raw Materials at Orana, and adds: "It's exciting when we get to step outside of the ordinary and ask ourselves: What is Orana? Where are we going? Normally, we are stuck in the mud too much and never get to see things from a vantage point above."

Additionally, the three-month program has given Orana a better understanding of how to involve the whole organization:

“ It should not just be a director who comes up with ideas. Now it's about getting the whole organization involved and understanding where we are heading
Sia Oskarson, Director, Fruit Based Raw Materials, Orana

A need for extensive expertise

Orana's involvement in Future Now has also led to the discovery of new customer types and business partners. Although the company already has highly skilled and experienced in-house competencies



in the area of technical product development - the core of their activities - they need assistance to explore alternative raw materials. Specifically, Orana needs help in sourcing these new raw materials, as well as in acquiring the necessary technical expertise to compress the right nutritional content into their future products. For example, the company needs specific technical assistance to help maintain the nutrients and vitamins from the raw and plant-based materials in the nutritious drinks for vulnerable groups in the world.

If Orana is to succeed with plant-based products in the future, they will have to integrate new collaborations into their value chain. For example, with DTU or other companies that specialize in developing nutrient-rich products for poor and vulnerable societies around the world.

According to Sia Oskarson, Orana must go a step further and ask themselves: "Who will be the most suitable company or institution to work with? And how can you get a hold of them and start a dialogue about future collaboration?".

Engaging the entire organization

Orana is currently working on the establishment of a competent project management group, which among other things, must continue to search for new and qualified partners. According to Sia Oskarson, Orana wants to engage all levels of employees so that it is not solely top management that drives the company's advancement in the plant-based market. Ultimately, it should be a collaborative process for the entire organization.

As part of the ongoing development of the project, as well as for other future projects, Orana will rely on some special design tools acquired from the Future Now program. In particular, design tools such as **'future scenarios'** and **'basic assumptions'** played an imperative role in illustrating Orana's path towards new plant-based product launches. In addition, the tools should facilitate the multinational company's ability to visualize their development throughout the organization and in all subsidiaries worldwide.



Case 03

Re-bag

Sustainable Packaging
in All Forms

About Re-bag:

Re-bag designs and manufactures packaging, working primarily with reusable and recyclable packaging. As experts in design, materials, and certifications, they advise their customers about the most suitable packaging solution.

*Number of employees: 8
Founded: 1999*

In joining our project Future Now, Re-bag, the small yet multinational Danish company, has achieved several new results that enhance its mission of greater sustainability and complete product transparency

Full transparency and recyclability

During the three-month **Future Now** program, the people behind **Re-bag** have been working intensively with new experimental approaches that provide new tools and methods. As a result, Re-bag, which specializes in reusable and recyclable packaging solutions, has already achieved tangible results ensuring transparency and greater recycling of materials:

A product movie about the lifecycle of the bags: The movie explains the life cycle of a bag and helps customers make more sustainable choices

New labeling systems to recycle parts correctly: Clear icons indicate how Re-bags should be sorted

A new material library: The library helps Re-bag's customers choose material based on parameters such as sustainability, certifications, etc.

“ We wanted to tell our customers how and under what conditions their bag was made, as well as what environmental impact it had. And of course, to help them make some more sustainable choices Mette Vinding, CSR and Marketing Manager at Re-bag

Re-bag is also currently working to renew their life cycle assessment of their products, which refers to the impact a product has on the environment throughout its entire life cycle.

As part of their commitment and goal to become a company that adheres to the **17 UN global goals**, the next big step for Re-bag is to move their production out of China. This process has already started, and thus, Re-bag is looking for new suppliers around the world who can produce similar products, perhaps even better and much closer to the Danish markets.

“We want to leave China. Because our basic outlook, as an individual but also as a company, is that we cannot support the Chinese government's practices regarding people, the environment, and control in general,” explains Mette Vinding, CSR and Marketing Manager at Re-Bag.

Exiting China: A challenging task

Re-bag has been searching for manufacturers in India, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Eastern countries to determine if they can take over the production.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the company must find someone who can perform at a minimum the same functions as their suppliers in China, but with better conditions.



Leaving China is unavoidably a challenging process, and economic factors play a large role in the search for new and more local suppliers.

"It's really difficult. When we discover a potential new supplier, it's always a question of whether the customers are willing to pay the price? Despite our desire to move out of China, we may have to move the factory to a place that costs more, and, as a result, our business will suffer since some of our customers are not willing to pay the price," Mette Vinding continues.

This was Re-bag's experience before the Corona pandemic when they formed a new partnership with the Danish cleantech company Plastix that resulted in a new type of bag made from recycled fishing nets. Overall, a successful collaboration with a local European manufacturer, but no one was willing to pay the price.

The company's participation in the Future Now program has made it imperative to find new manufacturers capable of offering the same prices that the company's customers are willing to pay. Because right now, Re-bag is facing a consumer barrier, namely the unwillingness of customers to spend that amount of money on a product even though everyone knows it's sustainable and the most climate-friendly thing to do. To overcome that barrier:

“ It requires a common understanding of the value of how important this is because otherwise, it will not happen, Mette Vinding, CSR and Marketing Manager at Re-bag

A new take on the future

Although moving out of China remains a challenge, participating in the program has been a great benefit to Re-bag, as they often do not have the time or resources to pull staff and develop new projects.

The Future Now process is specifically designed to give the participating companies the tools to see the future in a new light. Among the many tools offered during the process, **scenario-based design** and the **SDG Value Scan tool** have proved to be very useful to Re-bag. These particular tools have enabled the company to come up with new ways of taking action as well as discovering their impacts on society and the environment.

Implementing the tools has also given Re-bag a new perspective on its projects and business activities. "We've gotten a new approach to our projects. There has been progress on some projects that we may have known existed. Projects that were not defined and were not taken care of. Regardless, it's helped us move forward. It has even helped us get more business done," says Mette Vinding about participating in the three-month program that included three workshops as well as sessions with an appointed mentor and a lot of prototyping.

Through the program, Re-bag focused on:

- Achieving 100 % transparency on all products and their life cycle
- Becoming an SDG company
- Developing a strategy to move production out of China

The common aspect of all the focus areas is that Re-bag, after participating in the program, approaches their projects differently. One of the main benefits for them is the improvement in collaboration, leading to more effective outcomes across the organization. In the end, this helps the company achieve its core objectives of minimizing its impact on the climate and the environment and ensuring appropriate working conditions in the manufacturing process.



Case 04

Mouritsen

Introducing a New
Green Standard

About Mouritsen:

Mouritsen offers tailored solutions within offshore energy, fluid handling, and surface treatment. They supply everything from individual spare parts to complete machinery and know-how within all three areas.

*Founded: 2007
Number of employees: 35*

Mouritsen, a Danish company that offers tailored solutions within offshore energy, fluid handling, and surface treatment, joined Future Now and exited with a green mindset and a promising new partnership. Taking a new perspective on their organizational culture will give them a competitive advantage in a CO2-intensive industry

Having participated in our program **Future Now, Mouritsen** has achieved new important findings that will help the company to be more competitive in a future market. A market that may be characterized by uncertainty and new requirements. As part of its future strategy, Mouritsen has made it a priority to become a more knowledge-based company in the field of sustainability, to provide significant attention to the huge carbon footprint that the process and manufacturing industries possess.

According to Claus Andersen, CEO at Mouritsen, joining Future Now has forced the company to step outside of its comfort zone to gain new perspectives.

“ This process has been scary, as we came to realize what we should be good at and what we should look like if we wish to hold a position in the future. It has been a real eye-opener to us.

A new mindset and an upcoming partnership

Through the program, the team developed new skills and acquired several new accomplishments:

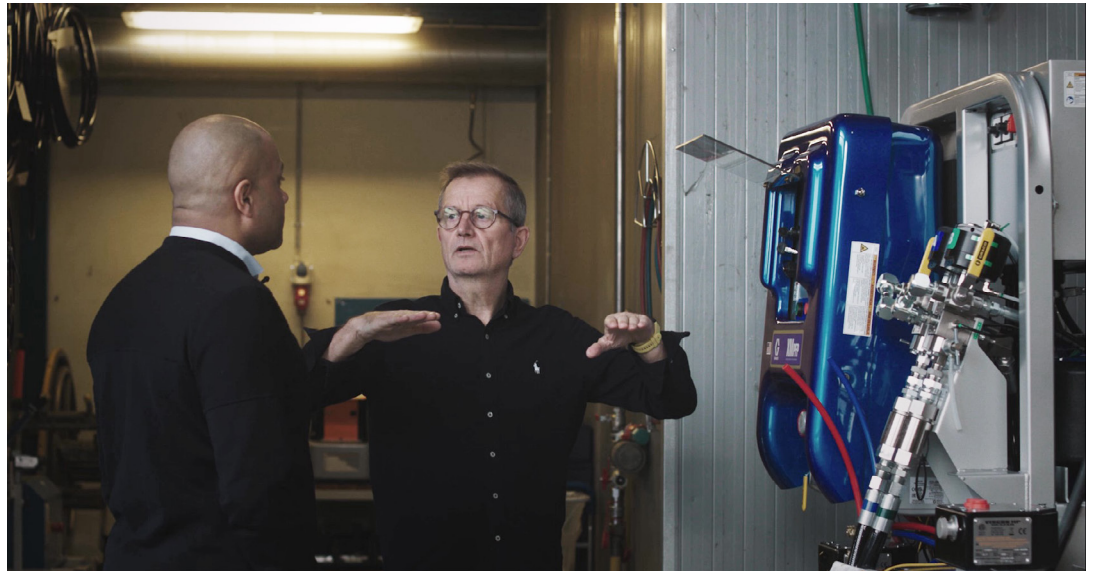
- A strategic partnership with a Danish global company: Together they seek to change the industry for the better.
- A plan to move from classic production supplier to advising their clients in sustainable production, starting with a client survey to identify their needs
- An industry-specific service that maps and improves the potential of companies.
- New competencies and tools to lead their future design-driven innovation

How do we set a new standard for going green?

The participating team behind Mouritsen were clear about the problem they wanted to explore: How can we create a service and a business model that support a green transition for us as well as other businesses in our industry?

Throughout the three-month process, Mouritsen has been very clear about the positive impact the company can have on the industry. In fact, the company could even take the reins as one of the industry's leading companies for the green transition. Therefore, Mouritsen's goal in the future is also to become a knowledge-based company that offers an extensive introduction to how the equipment they sell is used correctly, ensuring its longevity and minimizing carbon emissions.

Before joining Future Now, Mouritsen saw itself primarily as being a company selling machines. However, following their participation, they have realized how important it is to be able to convey knowledge about how the machines are constructed and how they are used more sustainably.



"We have a great opportunity to make an impact on the world since we produce machines, services, and know-how within a field which leaves a large footprint across the globe. If we improve the knowledge of our machines or the way they are used, we can make a huge impact," says Claus Andersen regarding the company's transition to a greener future.

As part of the company's strategy to become more knowledge-based, more business opportunities have also emerged. They plan to create a virtual and physical academy to provide training and competence development for their customers. For Mouritsen, this is a significant growth opportunity.

“ We must also move and develop in that direction so others can see the goodwill around Mouritsen - especially if we are to retain and hire the best employees, says Claus Andersen.

Prototypes on prototypes

Together with six other Danish production companies, Mouritsen was among the first participants in the Future Now program that included three workshops as well as sessions with an appointed mentor and plenty of prototyping.

With the many different design tools available during the program, Mouritsen worked with four different future scenarios for 2050 developed with a focus on industrial production companies. Among the suite of tools, the program also instructs the participating companies to make prototypes. And it was exactly the prototyping that made the difference for Mouritsen.

During the three-month program, Mouritsen developed a prototype for a special service that maps and improves the potential of companies in the industry. The prototype has already been successfully tested by several production companies in European countries, including Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Since the Future Now program ended late in 2021, Mouritsen has relied significantly on the design process, including the work with prototypes. *"The tool came in handy during our everyday work at Mouritsen. We believe that it is important to involve the end-user from the start and then design accordingly,"* says Claus Andersen.

Due to the program and the tool used, Mouritsen has raised awareness of their business model, so that the company will be more competitive in the future.

"Trying something new was necessary - something we had never done before. Now, shortly after completing the program, we meet with our new partner to discuss strategy. This is a truly remarkable process," says Claus Andersen, awed and confident about the future of Mouritsen.

To thrive in the 21st century, businesses need the ability to navigate a complex and uncertain reality of interwoven risks and opportunities.

This has never been more clear, as the current pandemic has accentuated the uncertainty we face — as organizations, communities, states, families, individuals and as a species. This all happens while many of our systems are already groaning and under immense stress: Everything from the atmosphere to the chemistry of our brains is out of balance.

COVID-19 is, however, far from the only factor. On the contrary, even if we are to gain some kind of control over the virus we can't expect our future to get any more certain. Uncertainty is what defines our times. While it all sounds daunting, we have to remember that uncertainty holds much more than just the risk of things getting worse. Uncertainty is an indication that the status quo is being challenged. It opens up an opportunity space. When things are in flux, we have the opportunity to reimagine things anew and change them for the better.

To be able to step up and claim the opportunity space, Future Now has demonstrated, that we need to focus on at least two things:

- 1.** We need to be able to bridge the far future and the immediate present. To think much further into the future and much faster in the present.
- 2.** We need to be able to zoom in and out. To consider both our dreams for the vast, complex, and interconnected systems we are part of and the single action that might bring us a single small step closer to making them a reality.

If we manage that, we might just stand at the cusp of something better.

