

Preface

Every company, knowingly or unknowingly, impacts public health, and it does so in four ways: through the healthfulness and safety of the products and services it sells (Consumer Health); through the efforts it makes to insure the safety and well-being of not only direct employees but also workers in its supply chain (Employee Health); through investments it makes to improve health and safety in the communities where it does business (Community Health); and through the impact of its operations on the environment, through carbon emissions and water use, for example (Environmental Health). In these four ways, every company lays down a population health footprint. The net impact of the footprint can—and should—be measured. A company that incorporates a Culture of Health in its mission and daily decision-making will not only seek to make its net impact on public health as positive as possible, but will also create business opportunities for itself in doing so.

In April 2016, a conference was convened at Harvard Business School, in partnership with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (represented by Professor Howard Koh) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (represented by Executive Vice President Jim Marks). The title of the conference was the same as this book: *Building a Culture of Health: A New Imperative for Business*. The 300 attendees included around 60 % from the private sector, 20 % from the not-for-profit sector and from government, and 20 % from academia. Panels discussed Consumer Health, Employee Health, Community Health, and Environmental Health. Concluding sessions addressed how to connect the dots, measure a company's overall population health footprint and implement a culture of health in a company. The consensus at the conference was that this is a useful starting point—there is much more work that must be done to fundamentally reframe how business thinks and acts in the realm of public health.

This book, and the examples of company best practices that are included, draw from the conference proceedings. As such, we are deeply grateful for the ideas generated by the participants and for the partnership of the co-sponsors that made the conference possible. The Harvard Business School Division of Faculty Research and Development funded the by-invitation-only conference; we thank Dean Nitin Nohria for his support of our cross-disciplinary and cross-sector initiative.

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