



Marjella Alma

Interview 7



REPORTING
2025

GRI's *Reporting 2025* project looks ahead at what thought leaders expect to be the main issues on companies' agendas – and in their reports – ten years from now. Through a series of in-depth interviews with thought leaders in various fields, GRI is building an open dialogue that will form the basis for meaningful future corporate disclosures.

Edited highlights of these interviews will be posted every month on the [Reporting 2025 webpage](#), along with related references that enrich the discussion. GRI will update and publish an analysis of the main trends identified in these interviews every quarter. In January 2016 the final publication will present a roadmap for the future of reporting.

Connecting the dots to drive change towards a collaborative economy

Marjella Alma is co-Founder and CEO of eRevalue, a data technology company with offices in London and New York City. eRevalue looks at the corporate reporting, regulatory and stakeholder landscapes, extracting useful and meaningful data to inform companies on what issues are really important, providing analyses and insights into trends. Armed with that information, companies can make strategic and informed decisions. eRevalue's Datamaran™, a business information tool aimed at companies and consultants, is being piloted by companies including HP, Suncor Energy, Mahindra and COP.

Scanning these landscapes means bringing information together and spotting correlations; Alma believes that the next decade will be about understanding the interconnections between sustainability issues to be able to tackle them. This, she says, will lead companies to break down internal silos, instead seeing business as the result of many interconnected actions and relationships. She sees society as a propelling force, expecting business to take responsibility, publish concrete goals and use reporting and transparency to drive change towards a collaborative economy.

Society: connecting the dots to envision a collaborative economy

"I think one of the major challenges we'll face in the next decade is making connections between all the different issues, actors and entities that are at play," says Alma. "The main sustainability issues themselves might not change significantly, but in the next 10 to 15 years we'll begin to see the real impacts of the issues we're tackling today, like food and water security, climate change and a rapidly increasing world population."

Tackling these societal and environmental challenges, says Alma, is a game of join-the-dots. "I think the challenge, then, will be in connecting those issues. When you – as a company, an individual or an organization – tackle poverty, or when you try to mitigate climate change, they are not isolated issues: all our major issues are actually part of the same problem. So breaking the silos we see now, and moving to a 'collaborative economy', will be a big part of how we operate in the future."

Companies: taking ownership to take steps forward

What does this mean for business? "Big terms like 'circular economy' and 'creating shared value' will all be directed towards breaking those silos, not just externally but internally, within businesses. That means connecting the departments themselves, as well as building deeper relationships with external players, like companies, suppliers, governments and customers."



This, she says, isn't just about forging links, but also about looking at them carefully. "Rather than companies saying 'let's look at a third party and see what they think is important for us, they should be using the work of third parties, to really integrate it into their own business systems. In the end, companies know their own business the best; they know the different relationships that they have or should have.

"I think ownership of these metrics is really important; when you talk about ownership, you talk about qualitative information. So as a user of data, you would want to see a connection between the metric and how that is going to help push the company forward – and even more than that, how it will make sure that the company is still fit for purpose in the coming decades."

Get ready: driving change through meaningful public commitments

From the metric, to the company, to society, says Alma. "An analysis of this gap between a company's own performance versus the larger societal goal would be really useful in order to see organizations really develop the way we move from individual performance to measuring the gap to the societal need.

"In the end we all know that reporting is about driving change into business and into society," she adds. "I really believe that reporting today is a necessary evil; what you actually want is that companies make a public commitment and say, 'These are my targets. These are my goals. This is what I am committing to and I'm putting it out there in the public domain so I can be held accountable.'"

Alma believes that technology is helping society hold companies to account, therefore driving change. "With the digital age I think we'll probably be moving into a whole set of different kinds of communication formats. In the end, it's about inspiring change in the minds of people, and driving change in the ecosystems in and around a company.

"I think what we'll start to see is more real-time reporting, with different data sets being used for specific audiences. The use of video and online platforms will also increase. PDF reports may still be used for the investor community, but I think a company has to start to feel the freedom to publish what makes the most sense for particular audiences, and keep the goal in mind of driving that change."

