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## The Zeronauts: Breaking the Sustainability Barrier

*John Elkington*

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A world of 9 billion people by mid-century will demand fundamental changes in our mindsets, behaviors, cultures, and overarching paradigm. Just as our species broke the Sound Barrier during the 1940s and 1950s, a new breed of innovator, entrepreneur, and investor is lining up to break the Sustainability Barrier. In this book, John Elkington introduces the Zeronauts — a new breed of innovator, determined to drive problems such as carbon, waste, toxics, and poverty to zero — as well as creating the first Zeronaut Roll of Honor, spotlighting 50 pioneers in the field of zero. Zeronauts are innovating in an astonishing range of areas, tackling hugely diverse economic, social, environmental, and governance challenges. To give a sense of progress to date, we zero in on five key challenges (the 5Ps): population growth, pandemics, poverty, pollution, and proliferation. The power of zero has been trumpeted, notably in relation to zero defects. This book spotlights key lessons learned in the field of total quality management — and introduces a five-stage "Pathways to Zero" model, running through from the Eureka! discovery moment to the point where a new way of doing things becomes endemic in the economy. In order to move from incremental to transformative change, we must embrace wider framings, deeper insights, higher targets, and longer time scales. This book investigates some ways in which leading Zeronauts are pushing change in relevant directions, with cases drawn from a spectrum of human activity — from water profligacy to human genital mutilation. If we learn from these pioneers, the twenty-first century could be our best yet.

The Zeronauts demonstrates once again how John Elkington has become our most accurate and prescient oracle with respect to sustainability, restorative commerce, and environmental innovation. In his judicious and respectful writings, he uncovers vistas of opportunity for start-ups, corporations and governments, panoramas of brilliant ideas that will transform our lives. Paul Hawken, author of *The Ecology of Commerce*, *Natural Capitalism* and *Blessed Unrest*, and the visionary entrepreneur who ignited Interface founder Ray Anderson's interest in zero. A pioneer within the sustainability movement, John Elkington continues to inspire us, shifting the spotlight from change-as-usual to breakthrough innovation. David Blood, Senior Partner Co-Founder, with Al Gore, of Generation Investment Management. The Zeronauts is a must read for the business minds of today and tomorrow. Jochen Zeitz, Chairman of PUMA and Chief Sustainability Officer of PPR. John Elkington is a one-man Tipping Point creator: what Malcolm Gladwell calls a maven, connector and salesman all rolled into one! The inventor of the triple bottom line and *Cannibals with Forks* has surpassed himself with *The Zeronauts*. David Grayson, Chair and Director of the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility, Cranfield University, UK 'The book is exceptionally well written and set out, making it essential reading for both visionaries and businesspeople. It draws on inspirational examples of best practice, thus stimulating both the imagination and a sense of hope without in any way underestimating the scale of our challenges.' David Lorimer, Network About the Author John Elkington is a world authority on corporate responsibility and sustainable development. He is currently the Founding Partner Executive Chairman of Volans, a future-focused business working at the intersection of the sustainability, entrepreneurship and innovation movements. He is also co-founder of SustainAbility (1987, where he is a non-executive member of the Board) and of Environmental Data Services (ENDS, 1978).