

# Transcript of 'Tackling Global Inactivity'

## Season 2, Episode 9, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

**Paul:** Hello and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow, the podcast from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business here at Lancaster University Management School. I'm Paul Turner.

**Jan:** And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

**Paul:** I can't help but noticing, Jan, that today you have some items of sportswear on you.

**Jan:** Well, I'm always like to be sporty because it helps my health.

**Paul:** It does. I mean, I'm, I'm wearing some, you know, bright green lurid trainers, you know that, you know, sport, that, that's a, some sportswear. I, I don't ever tend to wear anything that goes beyond, you know, sporting casual. And that's probably how most people would describe my dressing.

**Jan:** It's one thing to wear it, but do you feel like you get enough exercise in your day and, um, you know, building your health from that process?

**Paul:** I don't tend to wear this when I'm exercising. I wear other things when I'm exercising bizarrely. So all of my exercise takes place on a bike, and so things like that, and I don't wear what I'm wearing now.

**Jan:** Well, you'll be very pleased I'm not wearing my swimming costume.

[Jan and Paul laugh]

**Paul:** The, the reason we're talking so much about sportswear and sporting goods is because today we're joined by someone who is the CEO of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry, which until not so long ago I'd never heard of, I have to be honest.

**Jan:** And we're really thankful to have our guest, who was introduced to us by Andy Rubin, who is the President of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry. And he is one of the, um, family owners of Pentland Brands,

which of course is the sponsor of the Pentland Centre. So this has a lovely synergistic, um, friendly round sort of feel to this podcast.

**Paul:** And we'll have a chance today to discover exactly what the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry is, what they do, and how sustainability comes into their work and their operations.

So it's a very good time to welcome our guest, and it's Emma Zwiebler. Hello, Emma.

**Emma:** Hello Paul. Hello, Jan. Nice to speak to you again.

**Paul:** Well, as I've explained, you are the CEO of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry. So a good place to start is, what is that and what does it do?

**Emma:** Good questions. And first of all, Paul, I have to say, you said the name beautifully many times, most people struggle with it. It's not exactly a name that rolls off the tongue.

But the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry, or let's do WFSGI for short, or we'll take up half the podcast, uh, saying the organisation's name. We are the global trade association for sporting goods companies. For those of you, your listeners who are not familiar with trade associations, every industry has one. They typically have one at national, continental, and global level. And we are the global, uh, trade association for sporting goods companies.

Like all trade associations, we're a membership-based organisation and our membership base is broad. It comprises not just household brands, so, um, from a Pentland perspective, a Speedo or a Canterbury, and then broader membership, Nike, Adidas, Asics. But also the retailers, and we have quite a high proportion of membership, which is actually manufacturers, so companies producing the products, mostly based out of Southeast Asia.

So we're a very diverse organisation in terms of membership base. Broadly or, or roughly I should say, we believe we have around about 70% of the industry by global turnover in membership.

And our purpose as an organisation, so bringing together that very diverse range of companies that we have as members. Our purpose is to unite and support the global sporting goods industry to ensure a healthier, more active planet for all.

And picking up on what Jan said, obviously that's something that is very keen, uh, or, or a very big driver for Pentland as well as it is of course for WFSGI.

**Jan:** And can I just check, I mean I was really impressed with the 70% of turnover represented in the industry. Is that typically what trade associations come up to? And why would somebody not be a member?

**Emma:** Good question. I can't say for, for sure that trade associations would have something like 70% of, of the, the membership base.

Of course, if you're a continental federation, you're really looking at, in Europe, the European headquarters, or in Asia, the Asian headquarters. But of course, as trade bodies, it is our role to represent the industry and our member constituents. So having a high percentage of the industry in the demographic that you're representing them in, whether it's global, continental, or, or national, is important, right? It gives legitimacy, it gives weight to the topics you're talking about and the positions that you're, you're putting forwards.

And in terms of why someone might not want to be a part of it, that's also a good question and it's a journey I've been on, uh, since I became CEO of the organisation, is trying to make sure that we are absolutely clear on what our value proposition is for sporting goods companies.

What role should we take on their behalf in a world that is of course radically different to, to when the organisation was formed back in 1978. How can we deliver value for our members and particularly when you, you listen to our purpose statement and you hear, you know, we have this big focus on one, how do we help leverage the power of our industry to get the world to move more? And two, how do we work to support our member companies reduce their impact on the planet?

Making sure that this is absolutely crystal clear to companies on the inside of our membership base, as well as on the outside, is something that we hope will help drive more companies to join us on this journey.

**Jan:** Right. And, and I'll be really interested to know, how did you end up in that role there?

So what's your pathway to being the CEO of the WFSGI?

**Paul:** There's a lot of letters there, aren't there?

[Everyone laughs]

**Emma:** I thought it might be easier, but maybe it's only shorter.

**Jan:** No, no. I'm a bit dyslexic, so I'm just focusing, that's all. [laughs]

**Emma:** No, it's, uh, everybody, in fact, an anecdote and I, I am not sure if he listens to this podcast, but if he does, he will laugh, is that the IOC President has said several times, actually only recently to Andy and I, that we need to do something about the name. So it's not just the two of you, [Jan and Paul laugh] it's a commonly felt feeling.

No so my journey to WFSGI is not at all conventional or straightforward, but to pick up on something Paul said at the start, I too had never heard of WFSGI until the previous CEO came along and asked me if I wanted to come and work for the global trade association.

My journey towards WFSGI starts, actually, with my own sports career. So I was former, or I am a former professional, a badminton player. So I started my journey in the sports world as, as an athlete, um, as badminton player back in Scotland, striving to, you know, represent my country at World, Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

I made it to the world champs. I made it to the Commonwealth Games. I very sadly didn't make it to an Olympic Games. Um, but still it was (a) who I was as a person, and (b) what I did as a career up until I retired. I retired back in 2011 just after the Delhi Commonwealth Games.

And so at that time, you know, my engagement with the sporting goods industry was very much one of sponsor and athlete. And then, uh, I sometimes say for my sins, I retrained as a lawyer.

So I was studying chemistry as an undergraduate degree when I was an athlete. I then pivoted, uh, to go off and work as a, a lawyer. I stayed in sports world, um, and that's the theme of my life. I went on to be a sports lawyer, working mostly as a regulator and a litigator.

I'd actually initially thought that I would use my chemistry degree and my sports knowledge to become an anti-doping lawyer. But somehow along the way I lost track of that and, uh, the partner that I wanted to work with had, uh, gone off to do something else. So I actually never did a day of anti-doping law, but it was an ambition at one time.

And then about six years into my journey as a, working as a lawyer, I, um, I had started to feel that I had, um, a desire to go back to the world of sports where, you know, the world of athletes and sports is quite entrepreneurial, right?

You're, you're essentially building your own brand. You're building your own company as you play. And I really enjoyed the feeling that I was having a direct impact and starting to be able to push agendas and narratives. And perhaps as a lawyer, or perhaps as a junior lawyer, let me caveat that because I left so quite early, you don't quite have that opportunity.

And so when the phone call came from my, the previous CEO at WFSGI, would I be interested in coming to join the global trade association, I first of all did what Paul did and went, what's WFSGI? What do they stand for? And you probably googled us, I did the same.

And the spectrum of work that takes place at a trade association in WFSGI is no different, it's fascinating. The helicopter view you have over an industry, over the companies and the different issues that they're dealing with is really fascinating. It was fascinating to me at the time, and it still fascinates me today.

So I joined WFSGI back in 2018 and I got the opportunity to lead the organisation last year. And I can say I absolutely love it. I love the, um, diversity of work that we do, and particularly when it comes to these two top strategic priorities around physical activity and how do we help companies to reduce their impact on the planet, I also feel like I'm turning up to work every day doing something that matters.

I don't know if it's my lifelong purpose to actually, uh, change the perspective of trade associations as an employer, but, um, I would like to think that at some point, at some time in my lifetime, people would start going to their university careers counsellors and saying, you know what, I'd actually really like to work at trade association.

I dunno if I'll get there, but, uh, maybe that's my, my side hustle.

[Jan and Paul laugh]

**Paul:** It, it, it's interesting there that you say one of the two main aims of the, the Federation is to work with these companies to see how they can reduce their impact on the planet.

So sustainability is obviously really at the core of what the Federation does then?

**Emma:** Yeah. So we take sustainability as a broad term. And when you look at the UN SDGs, they don't just cover climate change. They don't just cover environmental issues.

And I would say the topic on which we have had the biggest activity and the biggest impact has been our work on physical inactivity. And largely because, I can spend some time driving down into this, but largely because there's been a gap.

Not enough people have been talking about this. Not enough people have been aware about it, and it is really a public health issue that is only going to increase. And because of the nature of it in, in terms of its impact, potentially not just on global public health, but also on our business, it's an issue in which the sporting goods industry is taking an increasingly bigger role.

We do have, um, as I said, our purpose statement alludes to the fact that we are working with our member companies to help reduce impact on the planet. Of course, it's not that the companies haven't been doing anything by themselves.

And so what we have been working through, and we're still to a certain extent at the beginning of that journey, is understanding where is it that we can offer them a place to collaborate in that pre-competitive space, which will make a bigger impact than they could do alone?

So it's a quite, it's slightly nuanced because of course in our industry, you know, we have, uh, for example, in Nike, which is twice the size of the next biggest company, in our, in our industry.

And we always have to be careful as a trade association to make sure that we are only working on topics that make the impact greater. Um, so we are not doing something that they could do better, uh, independently.

**Jan:** And on that theme, I'd really like to really open up the conversation and around the collaboration that you have with the World Health Organisation.

So if you could perhaps give our listeners some sense of what's at the heart of that collaboration and how did that come to the fore, because it would've been, I mean, these kind of collaborations take a long time to put together in these multi stages.

So I'm sure that there's a story in there that will help people who are wanting to elevate and to lift their performance to a, to a much more substantive level.

**Emma:** Yeah, it's a great question and it's, um, a very good observation that these collaborations take a long time.

Um, maybe just because your listeners might not be familiar with the statistics around physical inactivity, and this is, um, as I just mentioned before, one of the reasons why we're really trying to step into this space and, and do our best to elevate this issue both within industry, across industry and just more generally, um, in terms of public awareness.

The statistics around global physical inactivity right now, and, and WHO is the organisation that, that calculates this. So they have the globally comparable data set that they've been building, um, for over 15 years now, is that adult inactivity, so 18 to 64-year-old sits at 31%.

So 31% of the global adult population or 1.8 billion people do not move their bodies enough to maintain good health. So it's simply moving their body enough. 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week is sufficient to maintain your health, um, from a, from a physical activity standpoint.

That's already a pretty shocking set of statistics. But when you move to the next generation, um, so WHO calls them adolescents, but youth, children, whatever you would like to say, it's 11 to 17 year olds, the figure rises to 81%.

So 81% of that next generation who are our future sports participants, our future employees, and obviously from a sporting goods perspective, are future consumers, 81% of them do not move their bodies enough to maintain good health.

And when we think about that, what happens as they move from pre-adulthood into adulthood, and as they become the employees of the future, they become the consumers of the future or the sports participants. You can see that not only are we facing a radical change in the way that people engage with sport and physical activity, we're seeing a potentially huge public health risk in terms of, what does that mean when they enter adulthood already at risk, um, of not being able to maintain good health.

And of course, for the sporting goods industry, a huge future sustainability risk because of course, the industry has been one that has been growing and has benefitted from people's growing awareness of, of health and wellbeing.

If those figures do not change, so if we're not able to stall this rising in activity level, um, the WHO has already done the calculation of what it will mean from an economic standpoint and from a health standpoint, which is that 500 million more people will fall into ill health as a direct result of physical inactivity. So no other risk factors, just from physical inactivity, and at a cost of 300 billion US dollars to global healthcare systems.

And these are numbers that, they're almost too big to quantify, um, when you think about them. And, and to a certain extent somehow because they're so big, they become sort of hard to, almost without meaning.

But these are huge, huge numbers and it is an issue that is not getting enough airtime, which as you can probably tell from the passion in my voice, is one of the reasons that we are really throwing our weight behind it as an organisation and as an industry.

And the challenge there is that those numbers equate to a vicious cycle. Because the more people fall into ill health, the less likely they are to be physically active. And the more cost is spent on treating them means there's less money available in the general economy to invest in facilities or preventative care that might actually help them become more active. So it's an issue that we are very concerned about.

To bring WFSGI and our role into the equation, the organisation has had a physical activity group or committee as we call them. So these, um, groups of expert individuals from a range of different companies in our membership who support us with implementing our key strategic priorities.

We have had a group of, uh, of experts on physical activity since roughly 2010. In 2018 there was a bit of a step change in the way we, we approached this and the level of intensity, um, of work that went behind it and the importance that was placed on this topic was increased.

And that was because in 2018, WHO published two documents. They published the first, which was called the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity, which taking policy speak out of it as essentially their roadmap for countries globally to increase levels of physical inactivity, because they too, and for longer than the sporting goods industry, have been trying to raise awareness of the importance of this issue.



And the second most important document that was published that year was the updated adult inactivity levels, followed closely by the adolescent ones. Um, so these staggering statistics I've just taken you through of 31% of adults and 81% of adolescents.

Now when that happened, I think it was a bit of an alarm bell across our industry because the industry had sort of been, you know, taking out, uh, extremes over, over, uh, shorter periods of time, the industry has been on a general growth trajectory as again, people have had more available income to have leisure time, and people have become more aware of generally of, of health and wellbeing, especially, uh, post-Covid.

The reality is this put a bit of a, um, line in the sand, which is that the reality is our lives, our modern day lives, we have been engineering activity out of it for decades. And what we can start to see with the adult population, but particularly with that next generation, is that it is really starting to have a huge impact on levels of, of inactivity.

And just to come back finally now, Jan, to your question around the WHO. Since 2018, we have been developing a more and more intense relationship with them as we tried to explore, okay, how can we best support the work that we are doing? How can we best help them to raise the profile of this work?

Because even within the WHO, this topic does not get, in our view, the correct airtime. So it does not get the correct airtime with member states. And so we are trying to make sure that we are adding our industry's voice to the amazing work that they do on collecting this data and research, and trying to ensure that we are helping deliver a more impactful message that more needs to be done here.

**Jan:** One of the things that you said that really caught my attention is people were having disposable income to, you know, join sports clubs, et cetera, and at the same time we know that opportunities for, you know, free exercise and after school clubs, et cetera, are being sort of lost.

So would it be fair to say that both poverty and affluence are equally pushing this trend towards a, a lack of opportunity or maybe a, a lack of, um, exercise in general? Um, 'cause you're doing other things and sitting down.

I, I'm, I'm saying this while I'm sitting down. I'm starting to feel very guilty about sitting down, but.

**Paul:** The next episode of the podcast, we will record on a treadmill.

**Jan:** [laughing] Yes. That'll be interesting.

**Emma:** So generally, there are different trends across different communities, different income groups, different countries, different continents. But there are a few common threads that you can pull out around why inactivity has risen.

You know, we are not the specialists there as, as WFSGI, that's, you know, that falls to organisations like the WHO and like others. But definitely you can see, particularly in the United States, our American equivalent has done a lot of research on this, SFIA in the, in North America, around the fact that there is an income gap.

There is almost a direct correlation between the cost of entry to do sports in, in US has risen as there has been a cost-of-living crisis. And it does mean that to a certain extent this has an impact on people in lower income communities or lower income families and their ability to actually be physically active.

I mean, I think, again, I haven't lived in the UK for a long time, so I'm always a little bit careful about, about commenting on it, but, you know, when you look at newspaper coverage of what happened during COVID-19, the reality was there was a lot of coverage about people being able to put on running shoes and go out, or go out cycling in a way that they hadn't done before. But that's dependent on you living in an area or a part of the city in which you're maybe not in a high rise flat, or, you know, you have access to green spaces and safe cycle paths near you.

So there are a lot of different factors, um, that go into it. And one of the aspects within our MOU with the World Health Organisation, which we signed back in 2023, which has been another big milestone in our relationship with them, is really trying to make sure that we, as the sporting good goods industry are using the diversity of our membership to showcase the different ways in which it's possible, uh, to be active.

And I think that's one of the, one of the biggest opportunities we have as a sporting goods industry, is that our members are a diverse range of companies that, that support and produce products that facilitate a diverse range of activities. So we don't just have companies that promote people doing track and field, for example, or cycling, or swimming.

And so actually earlier this year, as part of our engagement with the WHO, as part of our partnership with them, we released a first ever joint industry statement in June when the WHO published their new adult inactivity data with roughly 25 CEOs or C-suites from across the sporting goods industry, all calling for greater action and awareness on this topic that we must do more and we must do more together.

And you had a huge range of companies coming in there, um, so obviously very well supported by Pentland because they're huge advocates for this work. But even within the Pentland Group, you know, you have Speedo focused on swimming, you have Canterbury focused on rugby, you have Endura focused on cycling. And that plays out across the whole industry. And that is what we need because it's not a one size fits all solution.

So, Jan, Paul, uh, you two might not do the same physical activity as each other, and you might do something completely different to me, but what is important if we are to tackle this issue is making sure that there's a diverse range of options for all abilities and skills um, because that is the way that we are, we are going to be able to raise levels of global inactivity.

**Paul:** Within your federation, do the brands, the organisations that take part, do they have an obligation to take part in these initiatives that you have going on? Are they relied upon to actually take some practicable action?

**Emma:** So we're a volunteer organisation in terms of no company is obligated, uh, to join WFSGI. Where I think the power is in that uh, to go to your question, is that the strategic plan that we developed over the course of the last 18 months, the key priorities that we came out with, and I'm not sure if I said that as part of our overall purpose statement, our overall strategic plan, tackling physical inactivity is our number one strategic priority.

And this was voted on by, first our board and then by our membership. That is their free choice to drive that agenda, and this is the agenda item that they are driving.

So while it is not a condition of membership when they join that they support and contribute to the work of the physical activity, through their voice, through their vote, they are endorsing that this is what the sporting goods industry's trade association should be working on globally.

And to be honest, where we are today in 2024, we more have a growing interest in this area of work and the, and in particular the advocacy work that we've been doing on their behalf, that we are finding more and more companies coming into the fold.

Now we do obviously have a constitution and a set of bylaws that all companies have to abide by, um, when they join WFSGI. And on the sustain, broader sustainability piece, we do also have a code of conduct that sets a baseline minimum for companies coming into membership.

This was actually established back in the eighties and nineties when Andy's father, uh, Stephen Rubin was actually leading the organisation. And that's, that's a very important document for us, especially in the current time that we are in, is that we are able to say that every member company that comes into WFSGI, not only do they have to agree to abide by set governance uh, procedures and bylaws that we have, but they also have to adhere to a code of conduct, which has, as I said, baseline minimum that they must abide by, in terms of working conditions, wages, hours of work, this type of thing. Um, and that's an important document for us as a trade association.

**Paul:** And do these brands who are members, do they recognise their own ability, their own power, their own influence when it comes to, in creating this kind of change that you're hoping for?

**Emma:** I think that's the unique nature of a trade association, and that is my job and my and the team's job, is to help them understand that on a topic like physical inactivity, it is bigger than them as individual companies alone, and it is actually bigger than our industry.

So where I am very grateful for the leadership of Nike, Adidas, and Pentland who've led, actually, our physical activity committee since it started, is that they had this leadership, they had this vision.

And when you have the two biggest brands in our industry saying, this is bigger than us, this is bigger than us as individual companies, and we must work together through the platform of WFSGI to try to drive change, you already have a great leg up, let's say.

I think in terms of where we need to lead and where we are trying to lead the industry is to say, look, we are not the biggest industry in the world. Sporting goods isn't um, you know, we are dwarfed to a certain extent by big pharma

or, or food and beverage, um, or electronics. But our industry is one of the most passionate and most engaged, uh, industries with incredible brands, um, that have a, I would say a disproportionate ability to reach the consumer and to spread messages, you know, that is at the crux of what they do.

And while they cannot tackle this alone because it is bigger than us, I think the power that they have to work through WFSGI probably boils down to, to three main areas.

The first is that, and I touched on it just briefly, we have the power as an industry to help elevate this issue within health. So, as I said, to provide our voice to support the work that the World Health Organization is doing on physical activity. We categorically need countries to put physical inactivity higher up their agenda.

We talk a lot about climate change and rightly so because it impacts, you know, the future of life on planet Earth. But we also need them to talk about human change. Because the way that we are living our lives, the increase in sedentary behaviour and the decrease in being active is having a huge impact not just on physical health, but also on mental health. So we need to support that work at WHO, and we can do that through the platform of WFSGI.

I think second, we need to become as a sporting goods industry, and this is something that we are really starting to build on and work out, um, with the team that's, that's helping us implement the strategic plan.

We need to become an advocate for this work, not just within our own industry, because we need to Paul, to your point, bring as many companies in our industry along on this journey as we can, but also across industry.

Because yes, it's correct that in the sporting goods industry, there is a unique alignment of public and private sector health goals. So by getting people to be more physically active, we are helping what is a serious public health crisis, but we are also, also promoting, or we will be delivering better business for, for the companies in our industry.

But we need to be bringing other companies in other industries along with us, because the reality is that that next generation employee, if they are coming through into adulthood, coming through into that, uh, employee age with physical and mental health challenges as a result of not having moved enough, this is going to impact all industries. It's going to impact all employers, in fact.

So whether it's public or private sector. So we do need to, to, to play that role as advocates to deliver better health and better business.

And I think the third thing for us is, and this is something, it's a body of work that we've just begun and it will take us some time to do. But we are trying to build out an impact report around a collection of case studies on what the industry is actually doing, and here, I mean, sporting goods industry, to tackle rising physical inactivity.

Because as an industry, we have taken notice, we have been working on this, we are raising our voices around it. But it is also clear that there's some great evidence-based initiatives taking place in our industry to tackle sedentary behaviour and inactivity.

And we want to put that together as a collation, uh, of case studies and best practice that can either inspire in industry, across industry, or also perhaps be scaled up, uh, by others to try and tackle this problem.

And really that comes back to the fact that we want to share what's already happening so it can be scaled up because it is bigger than our industry.

**Jan:** And what I like about that is that sort of global reach and significance is absolutely there, but it also then comes down to enthusing an individual.

So I, I'm an electric bike commuting person now 'cause I am lucky enough to live close enough to do that. And it's with a discussion with Endura, which is the, the bike you know, guys, I sort of, um, there was quite a bit of stuff about gravel riding and all sorts of like boys own, you know, mad stuff. And, and I was talking to them and saying, that looks fantastic. I can't do that. I can ride to and from work.

And he with a great big smile on his face said, oh, you're a joy rider. And he was right 'cause I get joy from that. And so it seemed to me that that clever use of branding and way of describing things was really impactful.

And now I can't help but smile and think I'm having a joy rider moment when I'm going to and from work. And so I think, yeah, that, it's that sort of that cleverness of the, the sales, the brands, the way we articulate what we're doing, that's really the key.

**Emma:** Yeah, I, I would just, um, I would maybe build on that slightly to say that that is probably what we have to find as an industry and, and also, you know, other advocates in this space, whether it's WHO, whether it's hopefully

governments in future, is that we have to find ways in which, um, they talk about it in the, within the UN world as physical literacy, which doesn't really, doesn't have that sexy marketing ring to it, right. [Jan laughs]

But, um, it's basically helping people to understand that moving their body has all these different benefits, you know. And it doesn't mean you don't need to, as I said before, uh, be a marathon runner or be an elite athlete to be able to derive these health benefits.

But you do need to move your body and you can find joy in that movement. And, you know, Jan, you found yours as maybe being a joy rider, but you know, it could easily be that it is, you know, doing yoga or taking a walk in the sunshine, whatever it is.

But we have to instil that in people, that it's not just a, a must have, it's something that will actually benefit you from a physical and mental health perspective.

**Paul:** As we're coming towards the end here, Emma, I just want to ask, have you seen any particular examples of change within the industry that give you real cause for optimism that really inspire you?

**Emma:** Yes. I mean, if we stick on the, the physical activity piece, we do an annual state of the sporting goods industry report with McKinsey and Company and, um, we published the, the latest edition in January, I think it was January this year.

And one of the items that we picked up was actually a change in marketing from sporting goods companies generally. So maybe 10-15 years ago, they would've really been focusing in on that performance sport piece, okay. How do you be the best of you? Or how do you, you know, become a time trialist Jan, that's your new, your new role, you know? Um...

[Jan and Paul laugh]

**Emma:** ...but they, they have seen an obvious shift in that away from the elite athlete to the everyday athlete. And you know, certain brands have played on that for a few years.

But I think that is very interesting because when you put that, the power, as I said before of our industry's reach an engagement with the consumer, I think that can be very transformative.

And actually, um, just to call out another one of our members that are, um, on the physical activity committee, um, uh, Asics actually released, um, a new campaign. I, I don't know, Jan, you're nodding your head, I don't know if you've seen it, but with Brian Cox, so who plays Logan Roy in Succession, I don't know if you know that TV series?

And of course for those, uh, listeners of yours who don't follow, Logan Roy is the owner of this, uh, family business and is known as a bit of a terror in the boardroom. And they've used him in this campaign to say, in summary, I am not the most terrifying thing in the boardroom, the desk is.

And this is the biggest killer in the boardroom is, or in the office, is basically, and it's gonna make us feel bad, all three of us sitting down doing a podcast. But the biggest killer is essentially being sedentary, sitting behind your desk all day.

And the premise of that campaign is that just get up and move for 15 minutes a day. Do it for your mental and physical health. And it really struck me, not least because it blew up on my social media, you know, um, obviously I work in the sporting goods industry, so it is a, a small echo chamber of, of, um, people that I follow.

But it was hugely impactful in terms of the message, you know, a pop culture icon in terms of Brian Cox and a, a TV show that has been everywhere. And I thought it was a fantastic use of brand messaging, brand power um, and I hope we get to see, see more of that as well.

**Jan:** And we'll make sure that we, we put a link to that at the bottom of the...

**Emma:** ...although I don't know if Andy's gonna be pleased that I'm promoting Asics, but you know, hey, ho!

[Everyone laughs]

**Paul:** And every podcast we do from now on, we are actually gonna do while we're running round, uh, an athletics track, so.

**Jan:** Well, or at least standing.

**Paul:** No, no, we're gonna be running around an athletics track.

**Jan:** Mmm...

**Paul:** ...you're too lazy...



**Jan:** ...thank you...

**Paul:** ...you're being too sedentary...

**Jan:** ...thank you, Emma, for setting him off on that tangent.

**Paul:** I'm making the arrangements now. We don't need a podcast studio anymore, we need a track...

**Emma:** ...I don't know if you'll invite me back...

**Paul:** ...I can find us one of them...

**Emma:** ...but if you do that, I'm very up for it. I, uh, I would be very happy to do the world's first walking, talking podcast.

**Jan:** Oh, yeah.

**Paul:** I can't help but feel that someone who has taken part in World and Common, World Championships and the Commonwealth Games in badminton will be a bit fitter than me and you and might therefore...

**Jan:** ...I think so, for sure...

**Paul:** ...put us to shame. Yeah...

**Jan:** ...For sure...

**Paul:** ...Yeah, well, thank you very much, Emma. This has been a really fascinating talk. It's been really good talking to you about all these issues.

**Emma:** Thank you so much, Paul. Thanks Jan.

[Theme music]

**Paul:** That was another brilliant conversation, Jan.

**Jan:** Well, we only know brilliant people. But also this is a really nice crossover, the things we've talked about before, about thinking about the whole system.

And so I think Emma was really good at saying, well, we can do this, but, but there's other parts to the system that they can influence but can't do anything necessarily about directly.

The other thing I liked is that we're almost returning to some of the ideas that we introduced in the keystone actors approach.

**Paul:** I was just about to say that when you said about how there's the influence there from, in this case, a trade body. And Emma was very honest in admitting, it's hard to explain what that necessarily does, but how the influence can be there and it can spread out and the tentacles can touch so many things.

And when you've got 75% of the industry taking part in that trade body. And obviously there's rules and regulations, but not necessarily you've got to do X, Y, and Z to be a member of this. But they're gonna be wanting to do things in that general sphere, and that's gonna push on and influence more people.

**Jan:** And I like the fact, we didn't have time to investigate it in more detail, but labour rights and human rights and how you manage your, your employment along your supply chain is, it sounds like one of the, you know, the founding elements....

**Paul:** ...mm-hmm...

**Jan:** ...which would make a lot of sense. And so I quite like as well that things are in the pre-competitive space, and then you can do more together than you can on your own.

That, that, those two things, you know really reflect the idea of a, a keystone actor cohort.

**Paul:** Yeah, there, there was some great stuff there. And obviously from the names that Emma was saying, obviously not names owned by Pentland, so maybe we'll just have to bleep them out.

So if you have heard bleeps throughout this previous recording, they're just the names of competitors. But they're really big parts of the industry. They're not an organisation that's working with really small parts of the industry.

Much as with the SeaBOS that you are involved with, you're working with some of the bigger partners in this industry...

**Jan:** ...yeah...

**Paul:** ...bigger stakeholders. So there's real potential for influencing change and the stuff that they're involved in sounds very positive.

**Jan:** And do you think you're gonna do more exercise?

**Paul:** Well, I don't want to become one of the 1.8 billion adults who are not getting enough physical activity to maintain health. And I was amazed that it was 81% of 11 to 17 year olds.

**Jan:** And I, yeah, that sort of reflects a, you know, because I'm very old, it reflects a different kind of childhood and upbringing than I think I had, um, we were hanging out on a farm. So we spent a lot of time roaring around just doing stuff...

**Paul:** ...mm-hmm...

**Jan:** ...so I think that's very different.

**Paul:** It makes me worry about my children who are currently aged nine and six. They're not quite in that 11 to 17-year-old bracket. But both of them at the minute take part in lots of sports, whether that's swimming, whether that's karate, whether that's football.

As a result, as a parent, you spend lots of time shuffling them here and there, making sure they're there to take part, but they love it and they want to do it. And I worry what's gonna happen in this next five or 10 years that's gonna make them say, actually I don't want to do this anymore.

And for the girl I can picture lots of things that are gonna happen because you know, there are stereotypical things that do happen with girls not wanting to take part in sport and such.

And I just hope that both of them carry on because I want them to, it's a key part. And it's amazing to see how this does tie in with sustainability as much as sustainability of the human population. Because if the, the human population isn't getting exercise, isn't taking part in these activities, then they're gonna get steadily, unhealthier and unhealthier, and they're gonna start dying younger and younger and, yeah.

**Jan:** Yeah. No, I thought it was a really positive, clear message for, for where we might want to head.

**Paul:** Now, next week. Where are we going next week, Jan?

**Jan:** Next week we're kind of sticking to some of the same themes, so I'm gonna talk to Professor Carlos Larrinaga to look at the idea, um, or some of the theories and the ideas about how things become normal for groups of entities.

So it's, he doesn't research trade bodies, but the theme behind it of how you draw people together and how do people decide, oh, that's normal we're going to do that, the same as everyone else.

**Paul:** Well I'm looking forward to that 'cause that's gonna be a nice continuation from the conversations we've had this week.

Until then, thank you very much for listening. I'm Paul Turner.

**Jan:** And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

**Paul:** Woohoo.

[Theme music]