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## **Leading in positive**

Francisco Reynés Massanet

April 2022

“Leaders are needed that are capable of just one thing: of being a positive influence”

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**Francisco Reynés Massanet** | Executive Chairman of Naturgy.

Francisco Reynés Massanet has been the chairman and CEO of Naturgy since February 2018.

An industrial engineer by profession, with a specialisation in mechanical engineering from the University of Barcelona and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from IESE Business School, Francisco has also attended senior management programmes in the US and Germany.

Francisco commenced his professional career in the automotive industry, initially at the Volkswagen Group and later at Johnson Controls. Subsequently, he was the general manager at the Uniland cement group. He has also been the deputy chairman and managing director of Abertis Infraestructuras, which he joined in 2009. From 2015 until he joined Naturgy, he was the chairman of Cellnex Telecom and led its flotation in 2015.

Prior to working at Abertis, he was the general manager of the industrial holding company Criteria CaixaCorp, where he also headed its flotation in October 2007. Francisco has also been a member of various boards of directors in different countries: Sanef, Eutelsat and Boursorama in France; Hispasat, Agbar and Adeslas in Spain; Arteris in Brazil; VíasChile in Chile; SC Enfida in Tunisia; Southern Cement in the UK and Cem. Avellaneda in Argentina.

Since he joined the energy company, Francisco Reynés Massanet has set a clear roadmap for Naturgy's process of change and modernisation.

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**Elected as the BEST CEO of 2020 by the prestigious Forbes magazine and recognised as CEO of the Year at the 2021 Platts Global Energy Awards, how would you define your model of leadership? In your experience, what qualities should a good leader have?**

In today's world, and I don't think it was any different in the past, but I am sure it is the case now, leaders are needed who are capable of just one thing: of being a positive influence. Being a positive influence is achieved through cooperation, team work and sharing successes with all those who worked together to achieve them. What I have tried to do throughout my professional career, and still try to do, in this regard, is not only to act this way, but also to believe it, because I really do believe in the importance of recognising that a positive outcome is the result of a job well done by many people.

**The pandemic has redefined how we work with and relate to those in our various social circles. In strange times such as these, in which we have had to adapt to virtual meetings and having little or no contact with others, how can leaders continue to motivate and inspire their teams?**

We are human beings and human beings need to see, be in touch and have contact with each other. Technology helped us to cope with an extraordinary situation such as the pandemic, but it cannot become the norm in terms of our day-to-day interactions. In the future, we need to be able to combine flexible working practices, which are facilitated through the use of advanced technologies and in many cases do not that differ much from our on-site work experiences, with real human relationships, which occur between people and arise as a result of physical proximity to others.

**Digitalisation has been an indispensable ally throughout the pandemic enabling companies to continue operating, and innovation will be key to accelerating economic recovery and fostering sustainable growth. How can this culture of innovation be fostered within companies? What role has it played in the transformation of the energy industry?**

The key factor here is change; change is an integral part of business activity and human activity in general. Fear of change is probably the main obstacle that deters any economic, political, religious or sports organisation from doing anything new. In my opinion, the first thing you need to be aware of is that to make changes you need to overcome this fear. European and, more specifically, Southern European cultures penalise mistakes much heavily than other cultures which are more willing to assume risks in the interest of the benefits that the change may bring. Digitalisation is just a change and we have to overcome our resistance to it.

**In contrast, the digital divide has proved to be a barrier to the creation of opportunities and social inclusion, what educational and technical training challenges do we need to overcome to help young people to enter the labour market?**

Technological progress is changing how we do things in all industries. The Naturgy foundation recently conducted a study to discover which skills professionals need to survive in the new energy and technology landscape. The survey's findings indicate that the skills required relate to the acquisition of greater training in areas related to the digital world and to the ability to adapt to change, not only technological change, but also other ways of working, relating to each other, etc.

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“Fear of change is the main obstacle that deters any organisation from doing anything new. Digitalisation is just a change and we have to overcome our fear of digitalisation”

**In terms of leadership, who have been your mentors? Which leaders or important people have inspired you along the way/throughout your career?**

I would actually refer to leadership styles rather than leaders. What I have developed, thanks to the various leadership styles I have seen, is a strong belief in a series of fundamental principles. You don't necessarily have to have many, but they do need to be sound. Developing a series of principles that are founded on ethics, hard work, and the satisfaction of seeing a job well done, is fundamental. The second lesson I have learned is the importance of attitude, of an attitude that characterised by a faith in others.

**Although the numbers are improving, we still seeing too few women in senior management positions in the science and technology fields. How can we increase women's presence in STEM careers? Which initiatives by companies and public authorities would be most effective?**

In my opinion, many actions are being taken and we are moving in the right direction to ensure that, sooner rather than later, women will be able to take their rightful place, which implies achieving representation of 50% since they account for 50% of the population. In terms of ability, men and women are equal. I don't think we will have to wait long before we see the effects of all the steps being taken. Take the example of Naturgy's Flex & Lead programme, which aims to hire young talent capable of holding management positions in the future. The last edition of the programme selected 300 technicians, 80% of whom were women. It is just a matter of time before they advance through the organisation and achieve the same degree of representation as men or, even exceed it, since eight of every ten technicians in the programme are women.

**In addition to diversity, sustainability is another of the big challenges facing us as a society. Spanish energy companies have been an important model in terms of their commitment to energy transition. How can leaders convey the importance of sustainability among their stakeholders?**

Sustainability is now a key strategic part of a company's worth. In the past, sustainability was seen as to be extra, nowadays it is the core of a company's strategic plan, not least because we have understood that a company's sustainable value also involves taking care of the environment, which is something that affects both us and future generations alike. What can we do to help further the impact of this message? At Naturgy we have created a sustainability committee as an executive committee of the Board of Directors. We have also published a strategic sustainability plan and established a series of measurable goals, that are not only ambitious, but are also metrics that can be monitored enabling us to know whether sustainability is getting better or worse. In this regard, I think we are heading in the right direction. In addition, we also need to comply and be more ambitious not so much in terms of the goal, but rather the timing. At this point in time, I would appeal to those companies that have yet to address this issue to get to work. People also need to get on board, because sustainability is not just about pollution, and supplier and customer relationships, sustainability is also about how we relate to society.

**Finally, young people are once again those most negatively affected by the new crisis, after the recession of previous years they now have to face the effects of the pandemic. What positive message would you send to future generations?**

Young people live in a world that is much better than that enjoyed by previous generations and, in all likelihood, they will leave a better world for future generations. A comment often made by old people is that the world was better in the past. That is not and never will be true because the goal of the human race is to move forward not backwards. However, the world of today does need to make a few changes. There are still too many pockets of poverty, inequalities and differences in terms of misaligned political and economic goals; there is still a lot to be done.

Young people are lucky in that they are better trained than ever; they just need to take advantage of this knowledge, work hard and understand that everything they have is thanks to their parents and that the legacy they leave for their children's generation has to be better than that handed down to them. That is what progress means; to move forward from one generation to the next. Old people often think that progress will not improve what has already been achieved. In my opinion, that is a very selfish vision

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