



# Driving away oil addiction

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is the founder and chief executive of Better Place

"How do you make the world a better place by 2020?" The question, posed to the group of Young Global Leaders at the World Economic Forum in 2005, spurred me to an entirely new life direction, focused on solving a single problem: how do you run a country without oil? I realised that we had to separate the cars we drive from the petrol that has had such a negative impact on our economy and environment, and to usher in a new era of sustainable transport.

In the current economic climate, environmental interests can

appear to be at odds with economic ones. This misalignment is no longer sustainable. We all know the hazards of oil: it's expensive; it's politically insecure; it won't last forever; and it creates vast amounts of harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Yet we continue to fill up our cars.

We are emotionally connected to our cars: we don't like to share them, and we like to drive them fast and far. Yet, while we would not let our kids burn fuel in their bedrooms, we collectively burn up their living room – our planet.



Transport innovation must play a critical role. According to the International Energy Agency, transport accounts for nearly a quarter of the world's carbon emissions. Electric vehicles (EVs) present the opportunity not just to minimise, but to eliminate, these completely from personal transport. Transport as a sustainable service – with zero-emission vehicles powered by renewable energy – eliminates oil and carbon from the equation, allowing us to combat the climate crisis without giving up our personal freedom.

Many solutions to transport, economic and environmental problems are piecemeal – disconnected and short-term. The hybrid car, for example, is only a stop-gap solution that prolongs our oil addiction, while only slightly reducing its use. Rising oil prices and environmental degradation have shown that we must change how we fuel transport.

Several technologies are jockeying to replace the internal combustion engine. We have studied them all, and decided that the electric drive train is the best. It will transform our cars into vehicles that produce prosperity in harmony with the environment and end oil addiction. So the battery-powered electric vehicle is the centrepiece of the vision of Better Place, the company I launched in 2007.

The opportunity to move to electric transportation is both global (evident throughout the world) and local (cars, regulations, driving patterns and energy usage vary). So Better Place is rolling out its solution on a market-by-market basis, focusing initially on those most conducive to fast EV adoption.

The price of driving cars in our cities is paid in deaths and respiratory disease from smog. The price of extracting and burning fossil fuels from deep in the ground is a change to the Earth's delicate atmosphere which regulates life. We may each be able to afford enough petrol for our cars, but we cannot afford to lose our only planet.

What if we take oil out of the equation? Sustainable transport can help the Earth prosper on many levels. By breaking the world's oil addiction we can realign environmental and economic

interests and use people's natural motivations and behaviour to help our planet thrive.

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In December, leaders from around the world will meet in Copenhagen to discuss and outline plans for an ambitious strategy to eradicate the threat of global climate change.



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green affordable for everyone. Software will optimise the use of energy, providing reassurance to the driver, efficiencies to utilities and overall cost effectiveness.

As we decrease our dependency on oil, we create a carbon-free economy that generates new jobs, levels the global playing field, and creates sustainable and environmentally beneficial growth

We work with all parts of the transport ecosystem, including automakers, battery suppliers, governments, utilities, energy companies and infrastructure providers. Better Place builds the infrastructure network and services that will enable individuals, businesses and governments confidently to adopt EVs anytime, anywhere. Since our inception, two years ago, Israel, Denmark, Australia, California, Hawaii and Ontario have committed to

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deploying electric car networks.

Simply put, we buy batteries and renewable electricity and sell miles – while developing infrastructure that makes EVs convenient, affordable and appealing.

Better Place connects clean energy sources, through the existing electricity grid, with car batteries – providing drivers with an alternative to burning gasoline. Doing this on a scale that can move an entire country is to create a virtual oil field – one that will never run dry and will not kill us in the process.

The infrastructure includes hundreds of thousands of charge spots per region, in private homes, workplaces and public places. These are supplemented by a network of battery switch stations that will allow drivers to swap a depleted battery for a full one, in less time than it takes to fill a tank with petrol, thus removing the main perceived EV constraints of long battery recharge time and limited driving range.

Better Place will own both the fixed infrastructure of this system and the batteries (separating battery ownership from the car). By making the battery an extension of the infrastructure, we can provide consumers with greener and cheaper motoring, making being

for future generations. We and our worldwide partners – including auto makers, battery manufacturers, energy companies and governments- are making rapid progress. Israel has declared its commitment to be oil free by 2020. Denmark committed to a renewable energy-powered electric car network, presenting new opportunities for its considerable stores of wind energy. Australia decided to reduce its carbon footprint by utilising its robust renewable energy supply. The California Bay Area will be the EV capital of the U.S. And Hawaii has the goal of changing from getting 95 per cent of its energy from imported oil today to meeting 70 per cent of its energy needs from clean energy by 2030. Twenty-five more countries around the world are already talking to Better Place about how to be next.

We believe we are on an accelerated path to something truly amazing: sustainable transport and economic growth that really benefits our planet, and leaves nothing behind – except the addiction to oil.