

New business and value models

How can you create value beyond today's financial results? This is one of the key themes explored in our Trend Report. In this report, BDO looks ahead to 2030 together with trendwatcher Tom Palmaerts. We show how Belgian companies can shape the future with agility and confidence. Human capital, agility and the capacity to innovate increasingly determine an organisation's true value.

New business and value models

The valuation of companies is in full transition. Where financial results were once the ultimate benchmark, attention is increasingly shifting towards broader indicators that reflect future resilience and societal legitimacy. Investors, customers and employees want to understand not only how much a company is worth today, but above all why it will remain relevant tomorrow.

HUMAN VALUE AS A LEVER

One of the strongest shifts is towards employee experience. Companies that retain and motivate their people build a brand that appeals both to investors and customers. Without motivated employees, a strong customer experience is simply impossible. The British cosmetics retailer Lush has given its employees the freedom to make their own decisions in the shop. They get to write their own script, fostering pride, entrepreneurship and customer relationships that go beyond transactions.



FROM OWNERSHIP TO ACCESS

Business models themselves are also shifting. The price of a car has doubled in ten years and ownership is becoming less self-evident. In Flanders, almost 50,000 people now use a shared car, accounting for more than 700,000 trips per year. ARK Invest predicts that autonomous taxis will reduce mobility costs per mile by more than half by 2030. A fundamental question arises: do consumers still want to own or merely have access? The answer is already taking shape in other sectors, from streaming services to SaaS: companies create value through licencing and service models.

A NEW SET OF RULES

This shift from ownership to access brings both opportunities and complexity. How to value recurring revenue, digital assets or circular chains on a balance sheet that once consisted solely of profit and loss? Companies must redraw their accounting and valuation frameworks. At the same time, geopolitics is making market access increasingly difficult. Protectionism, regulation and tensions are forcing companies to demonstrate agility alongside financial robustness.

TECHNOLOGY AS A VALUE FACTOR

The final gamechanger is technology. The integration of technology into processes, culture and strategy is increasingly determining a company's value. A tech assessment is becoming indispensable. How mature is the digital infrastructure? How secure is the data? How strategic are the AI applications? Companies that provide clear answers to these questions find it easier to convince shareholders and partners.

"Technology increases a company's value when it improves processes, deepens insights and accelerates decision-making. Concrete examples include AiGust, where data analysis leads to fewer errors, shorter turnaround times and higher reporting quality. This shows it is not only about efficiency but also about strengthening advice, service and decision-making. Technology shouldn't cut costs but improve human performance. That is why an organisation's technological maturity is gaining importance in valuation. In future, the 'tech factor' will be decisive, especially in sectors where data and automation are of strategic importance. Today's investors not only consider profit but also a company's ability to innovate, improve and adapt quickly. Companies that deploy technology intelligently are creating long-term value and building a lead that will be hard for competitors to emulate."

Alexander Veithen, Managing Partner
Advisory BDO Belgium

NEW COMPETITORS

The competitors of tomorrow are not always the traditional players. Digital disruption is generating new business models that are reshaping entire markets. In sectors such as technology and services, not only international competitors are emerging but also local start-ups that scale rapidly thanks to data and AI. For companies, it is crucial to analyse the broader competitive landscape: who is creating value in a new way based on which data or technology? Collaborations such as those between BDO and external consultancy partners help organisations detect these risks and opportunities at an early stage so they can position themselves strategically.



The shift in value models is an opportunity for companies to showcase their real strengths. Whereas traditional accounting often focuses solely on numbers, organisations can now also leverage their culture, creativity and sustainability. It opens the door for companies that start small but grow into global players thanks to a strong purpose, an agile team and smart technology. The value of tomorrow is multi-layered, making it both more realistic and more hopeful.

"Financial figures alone will play an ever-smaller role in determining a company's value. Due diligence will increasingly examine non-financial factors such as sustainability, talent retention, innovative capacity, data quality, governance and societal impact. Organisations that integrate these elements strategically not only build trust, but also create a structural competitive advantage that translates into a higher long-term valuation."

Alexander Veithen, Managing Partner
Advisory BDO Belgium

www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2025/02/19/deelmobiliteit-deelauto-s-deelfietsen-deelsteps-way-to-go/

WAKE-UP CALLS FOR BUSINESS LEADERS



1. Financial figures are no longer enough

Employee experience, well-being and societal impact are becoming measurable components of value.

Recommendation: develop a set of internal metrics around human and social capital.



2. Product to service is not a trend but a shift

The automotive industry demonstrates how quickly ownership is giving way to access.

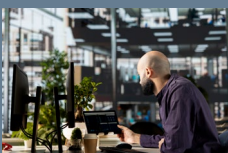
Recommendation: explore whether your offering can be shaped into subscription or service models.



3. Value also lies in agility

Geopolitics and regulation can suddenly change market access.

Recommendation: build alternative scenarios and invest the same amount of energy in your adaptability as in maximising your profit.



4. Tech determines market value

Strong technological integration makes companies more robust and more attractive.

Recommendation: conduct regular tech assessments to map maturity and risks.