



Figure 1.3 Decline of manufacturing jobs.

Source: The Economist (2017b:18).

to create added value for owners and society over time. In the management literature, the purpose of a company is defined as the central reason for its existence, a key goal of the company that connects all those who in one way or another depend on the company and vice versa. Purpose is an integral part of a company vision and mission and is directly influenced by four groups of factors: corporate governance (who the company should serve), business ethics (purpose priorities), interest groups – stakeholders (who the company serves) and cultural context (purpose priorities). The purpose of the company puts people and their expectations at the centre of the company. This approach to managing a company is necessary to understand the complex role of people inside and outside the company (Johnson et al., 2005).

Purpose and academic discourse

After losing its importance in the 1970s and 1980s, the purpose as a business guide became relevant again in the late 80s of the 20th century, in order to gain full affirmation in the business community and society today. Public discourse on the purpose of business companies has quadrupled since 1994, and is growing exponentially, even faster than the discourse of “sustainability” (EY Beacon Institute, 2015). It is obvious that companies that have realised the importance of business purpose timely have become leaders or are among the most successful in the market. According to the report by the EY Beacon Institute in just a few years, from 2013 to 2015, in over 100 research papers, the purpose of the company was the subject of analysis. Much of the literature focuses on several current aspects, including the role of leadership in affirming a company’s purpose, the purpose as a tool for involving consumers and employees in the planning process, making