

How to communicate Corporate Sustainability without Greenwashing - 10 Point Checklist

Sustainability sits at the core of your business.

Like more & more organizations, you are trying to do the right thing for people and planet - which is a huge positive for us all.

But communicating clearly and authentically about it doesn't always come easy. Obviously, it can mean that the stakes are higher and you need to avoid going out and and make misleading claims or give the impression that you're more sustainable than you are - intended or not.

But don't worry, we've got you covered. Here are our guidelines to avoid pitfalls when it comes to telling your impact story:

Checklist:

Be **authentic** and transparent, honesty is the best policy.

Tell the **full** story, talk about your **successes and challenges** equally, and how you aim to improve areas you're still working on.

Set ambitious yet achievable **milestones in the short, mid, and long term (not just for 2050!)**, communicate your roadmaps to reach them, and hold yourself accountable to them on a regular basis.

Sustainability is a journey. Be open about where you've come from, what you are doing, and where you're going.

Center the voices of people who are on the frontline of your sustainability work in your storytelling, particularly those from **marginalized groups across your full value chain.**

Sustainability should influence all parts of your company, so **educate everybody across the organization** about your sustainability strategy and efforts, and encourage them to think about how they can contribute - from your financial department to your product team, from board members to shareholders. Taking them on this journey with you will change the way they look at the topic and perceive the valuable part that sustainability has for your company.

Eg 1: Did your finance team choose the right bank to support your sustainability goals, or the most ethical pension funds?

Eg 2: Did the product team think of the best possible packaging design and materials? You see what we are aiming at here :-)

Eg 3: Make sure that your communications & marketing teams 100% understand what they are talking about to avoid any misleading claims that 'look good' on social media but can become a huge pitfall for your brand image if they get called out for being misleading AKA greenwashing.

Be original and thoughtful to stand out in your market

Do your research, and don't just opt for the 'easy option' (eg. plant a tree for every purchase) - this can be a valuable contribution but there are many potentially more impactful alternatives.

If you face criticism, don't ignore...engage with your audiences - you may learn something or come to realize a new perspective you'd missed.

Measure ALL of your impact and **back your claims with evidence.**

Don't market your action as the silver bullet, take the holistic approach.

And remember: there isn't a finish line. This is a journey.
Take your customers, employees, and shareholders on it
with you - and keep on rocking for a clean world.

