

Strategic Communications Playbook

Research, Tools and Resources to Effectively Tell Your Story

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SUMMARY

This Communications Playbook is designed to help organizations effectively communicate their sustainability efforts, not only progress and updates, but also challenges and possible setbacks.

It provides the data and tools needed to strengthen internal planning and collaboration as well as enhance external messaging for greater impact. By telling the full story and business case for these efforts, organizations can better demonstrate why sustainability initiatives matter to their bottom line and to consumers, employees, and investors alike.



Executive Summary

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Organizations are encouraged to adapt this Playbook to fit their unique needs, goals, and company structure.



Data shows that climate, environmental, and social efforts help an organization's bottom line. These initiatives [incentivize companies](#)¹ to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and mitigate risks—whether operational, reputational, or legal. They also help safeguard against future disruptions, particularly within the supply chain. It makes good business sense and should remain a key business strategy.

An organization's approach to and framing of this work will inevitably shift depending on:

Internal Changes:

Reorgs, leadership changes

External Factors:

Pace of technology change, shift in market/
consumer demand, political climate

It is essential that organizations tell the full story of their sustainability efforts—not just their environmental impact, but also the business value, risk mitigation, and long-term resilience these initiatives create.

Use this Playbook to communicate more effectively with your key audiences.

The Playbook provides guidance in two key areas:

Internal Processes:

to enhance planning and collaboration

External Communications:

to craft messages and content tailored to diverse audiences

With proactive planning, you can navigate transitions confidently and maintain credibility during crises or periods of change. It also helps you avoid last minute scrambles or missed opportunities by laying the groundwork ahead of time.

This Playbook is for communicating commitments, plans, and results of work that has already been done. If the fundamental work has not been done, then there is no communications solution to cover for a lack of commitment, planning, and progress.

Consider sharing the [“Strategic Messaging”](#) section with your communications peers or anyone else at your organization responsible for communicating your efforts. Partnering with these key internal stakeholders will be critical to ensuring your success.

The Playbook should be first reviewed in order, as each section builds off one another. Subsequently, you should use it as a helpful reference. Included in the Playbook are resources and templates. Download and use them to help you with your efforts.

For investors...

There is a [strong pro-climate bias](#), including Republicans, based on a 2024 Potential Energy Coalition study.²

For consumers...

[N]early eight in 10 (78%) of consumers said sustainability is important to them when choosing a brand to shop from, according to a [2024 IBM consumer study](#). Additionally, 61% said they’d change their shopping habits if it meant helping reduce negative environmental impacts.³

For business leaders...

[71 percent](#) of C-suite and functional corporate leaders surveyed now view environmental, social, governance (ESG) investments as a source of competitive advantage, according to a 2024 Thomas Reuters report.⁴

For employees...

[75 percent](#) of human resources (HR) executives believe ESG strategies positively impact employee engagement, and 64 percent say ESG efforts positively affect their efforts to recruit with the necessary skills, per a 2023 SHRM ESG study.⁵