Sustainable products, services and behaviors are the future. They are better for business, consumers and the planet, and increasingly consumers are asking for them.

Ninety-three percent of global consumers want to see more of the brands they use support worthy social and/or environmental issues, and three out of four teenagers say they want to buy more sustainable products.

So why is selling sustainability so difficult? Consumers are asking for them, and increasingly they are better for business, consumers and the planet, and behaviors are the future. Sustainable products, services...
Why is Selling Sustainability So Difficult?

It shouldn’t be. We know that consumers “care.” We have surveys in abundance that prove the difference between what consumers say in surveys and what they go on to actually do. We know that consumers pay attention to social and environmental credentials, especially in the millennial generation. But all of those good intentions don’t fully translate into measurable purchase decisions.

Most sustainability marketers today only sell sustainability. At most, the consumer is buying a feel-good factor or a guilt-offset. That’s simply not enough. There is one simple question that can change everything: "How can sustainability give my consumer more?"

Most sustainability marketers today take the lead on sustainability, learning from participating businesses on how to make it sustainable. But all of those good intentions aren’t enough.

The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years. The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years. The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years. The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years.

About the Sustainable Lifestyles Frontier Group

Jointly launched in April 2013 by BSR and Futerra, the SLFG is taking the lead on sustainability marketing, learning from participating businesses on how to make it sustainable. It’s the team of our SLFG member companies.

To join our group, please contact Elisa Niemtzow:

eniemtzow@bsr.org

About this guide

This guide was designed for the sustainability, brand and marketing teams of our SLFG member companies. The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years.

MARKETING SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES — THE SECRET TO SELLING SUSTAINABILITY

About this guide

This guide was designed for the sustainability, brand and marketing teams of our SLFG member companies. The insights are based on brand workshops held in the USA, Europe, and Asia over two years.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

OFFERING MORE FROM SUSTAINABILITY

SELLING SUSTAINABILITY — 04
For most sustainable products and behavior campaigns the hard question of “what’s in it for the consumer?” is still largely unanswered. Sustainable products and behaviors are better for the planet; we need to make them more obviously better for the person. There is a value equation. You need to tip the balance between the barriers and benefits of your product or campaign to deliver a compelling value proposition from sustainability.

Benefits can be functional, emotional or social. Driving an electric car can come with functional benefits, in that you can refuel at home. It also has social benefits: drivers can connect to a community of electric car owners and “believers,” who use apps and online forums. Electric car makers can come from sustainability.

Barriers can be lack of skills, motivation, infrastructure or beliefs (to list a few). Behavioral barriers to purchasing an electric car might be the belief that the driving experience will suffer from inferior interior experience. An electric car might be better than a few other beliefs (to list a few). For example, a barrier to purchasing an electric car might be the belief that the driving experience will suffer from inferior interior experience. The belief that the driving experience will suffer from inferior interior experience.

Removing the barriers and shining a light on the benefits is how you deliver better consumer value. For the person, we need sustainable products and behaviors to make them more obviously better for the planet: we need a compelling value proposition from sustainability. This is how you deliver better consumer value.

VALUE = MORE BENEFITS + FEWER BARRIERS

CASE TOO NEED A BUSINESS CONSUMERS
Every sustainable product or campaign needs to answer the question: what's in it for the consumer? If the balance towards benefits isn't strong enough, then it's back to the basics – you need to build in more benefits.

Barriers and benefits fit into three broad value categories: functional, emotional, and social. To help you analyze and brainstorm the type of barriers and benefits that could be enhancing or limiting your value proposition we have suggested here a few prompt questions.

**FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS**
- Can sustainability add to safety or risk?
- Add to or detract from personalization?
- Enhance or detract from performance and efficacy?
- Make their life easier or harder?
- Make their life happier or sadder?

**EMOTIONAL BENEFITS**
- Improve or worsen quality?
- Make my consumer more or less desirable in others' eyes?
- Make my consumer more or less cool, smart and able?
- Provide a thrill of excitement or only a dull experience?
- Strengthen or weaken self-worth?
- Heighten sense of belonging or disrupt family bonding?

**SOCIAL BENEFITS**
- Make them seem more or less desirable in others' eyes?
- Make them appear more or less cool, smart and able?
- Facilitate or disrupt belonging and community?
- Make them feel more or less connected?
- Help them prove how cool, smart and able they are or make them look foolish?

Build in more benefits! After deciding which benefits are most important, you need to go back to the basics – you need to build in more benefits. If the balance of benefits isn’t strong enough, then you need to build in more benefits.
Here are three examples of brands and products that have offered their consumers clear and compelling benefits while tearing down barriers.

**FUNCTIONAL**

- **Tesla**
  - **Emotional**
  - **Social**

**INTERMARCHE**

- **Functional**

**INTERMARCHÉ**

In a fight against food waste, Intermarché sold their imperfect fruits and vegetables at a 30 percent discount under the banner "Inglorious Fruits and Vegetables." Through compelling messaging, Intermarché offered consumers value for money and made tackling food waste the sensible and easy option.

- **Teslas**
  - **Insane Mode**
  - **Motion**

**NIKE**

To encourage more people to exercise, Nike offered its consumers the opportunity to set goals and track their progress with the Fuelband. This was paired with a platform where users could share their fitness goals and progress publicly, making goals more likely to be met.

*NIKE is now concentrating on new wearable technologies with Apple.*
Check your own product, service or behavior against this framework. Use the questions on page 6 to identify the barriers to overcome and the benefits you could offer. Your value proposition should emerge stronger and clearer.

Value = More Benefits + Fewer Barriers
WANTED: MARKETERS (WHY YOU’RE AMAZING)
SELLING SUSTAINABILITY — 09
WHY MARKETERS MATTER

As a marketer, you know how to analyze your audiences and get to the core of their wants and needs. You already have your audience's attention. It's time to analyze businesses in the process.

There's no substitute for sustainability. Worthiness implies the consumer must value. Keep a careful watch out. Worthiness creeps in when the value proposition isn't strong enough. Worthiness positioning can kill even the smartest sustainability marketing. There is kryptonite lurking in sustainability superheros.

If we can unleash consumers' demonstrated desire for sustainability, then we can unleash consumers' demonstrated demand. Consumer demand for sustainability is the frontier of our transition to a greener, fairer and smarter global economy. You have the power to unleash that consumer demand by strengthening consumer value. You have the power to help consumers to make a sacrifice. That's not a great start.

Strengthening consumer value understates the consumer demand by worthiness. Worthiness implies the consumer must make a sacrifice. That's not a great start. Worthiness implies the consumer must value. Keep a careful watch out. Worthiness creeps in when the value proposition isn't strong enough. Worthiness positioning can kill even the smartest sustainability marketing. There is kryptonite lurking in sustainability superheros.

There might make you the most uncomfortable when marketers feel uncomfortable 'selling' sustainability value. Keep a careful watch out. Worthiness implies the consumer must make a sacrifice. That's not a great start.
Build confidence by knowing the rules of Greenwash avoidance:

1. Flukey language
   Words or terms with no clear meaning, e.g., "eco-friendly"

2. Green products & dirty company
   Products made in a factory which has an inefficient right impact
   for a green impact

3. Suggestive pictures
   Green images that indicate a (un-justified) green impact
   e.g., flowers blooming from exhaust pipes

4. Irrelevant claims
   Emphasizing one tiny green attribute when everything else is un-green

5. Best in class?
   Declaring you are slightly greener than the rest, even if the rest are pretty terrible

6. Just not credible
   "Eco-friendly" cigarettes anyone? "Greening" a dangerous product to decease

7. Gobbledygook
   Jargon and information that only a scientist could check or understand
   "A label that looks like third party endorsement... except it's made up"

8. Imaginary friends
   A 'label' that looks like third party endorsement... except it's made up

9. No proof
   It could be right, but where's the evidence?

10. Out-right lying
    Totally false claims or data

For more often, it's the result of over-enthusiasm, not malicious plots to deceive.
It's the result of over-enthusiasm. Familiarize yourself with the basic rules of Greenwash avoidance:

Familiarize yourself with the basic rules of Greenwash avoidance:

Build confidence by knowing the rules of Greenwash avoidance:

- Greenwash is rarely caused by malicious plots to deceive.
- It's the result of over-enthusiasm.
MESSAGING

RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT MESSAGE

MESSAGING MOMENTS

SELLING SUSTAINABILITY — 12
Outstanding sustainability marketing starts with a clear value proposition, but it doesn’t end there. Media convergence and proximity technology has given marketers more ability to target than ever before. For sustainability this is a helpful development. But as you’ll find in the following pages, receptiveness to sustainability messages fluctuates throughout the day. For behavior change campaigns, it’s especially important to track these changes. The best moment to affect a habit, like recycling, is to reach the consumer at their point of behavior (PoB). The high impact PoB for sustainability is also the least receptive moment for heavy, scientific or worthy messages.

Receptiveness to sustainability messages fluctuates throughout the day. For behavior change campaigns, it’s especially important to track these changes. The best moment to affect a habit, like recycling, is to reach the consumer at their point of behavior (PoB).
Every brand operates in a unique and specific context. But most people operate within some basic routines and habits of daily life. Building a layered appreciation of daily rhythms, and daily environmental impacts, can ensure the right message, at the right time, reaches the right person.

Humans all deal with circadian rhythms—our 24-hour cycle of physiological processes. The highs and slumps in our wakefulness affect our ability to process information and our susceptibility to sugestions. The highs and slumps in our wakefulness affect our risk-taking, memory, and openness to suggestions. Simply put, we make poor decisions when we’re hungry or tired, when we’re not at our peak levels of cognitive function.

This chart shows the peaks and slumps of wakefulness and rational decision-making throughout the day. Understanding these natural highs and lows can help you align your marketing efforts with the best times to reach your audience.
If you are seeking to change consumers’ long-term behavior, we suggest you analyze when and where they create the biggest environmental impacts with your product. For example, this graph illustrates how a consumer’s energy use fluctuates throughout the day.

Our personal wakefulness changes throughout the day, and so does our environmental impact. In the morning, showers, breakfast, and washing build a first peak of impact. By the evening, watching TV, cooking dinner, and lighting lead to the highest footprint of our day. In the evening, our showers, breakfast, and washing build a second peak. If you are seeking to change consumers’ long-term behavior, we suggest you analyze when and where they create the biggest environmental impacts with your product.

Our wakefulness and impact don’t align. In the evenings, during our biggest household impact, we are the least open to any rational or functional messages about sustainability. This paradox is waiting to catch unwary change campaigns.

**Paradox**

**The Impact**

Our wakefulness and impact don’t align. In the evenings, during our biggest household impact, we are the least open to any rational or functional messages about sustainability. This paradox is waiting to catch unwary change campaigns.
Changing behaviors will make the most difference in time; these are the messages that handle in the evenings. So at this emotional messages are all we can bonding with family work, in stores and when social benefits are valued at mornings or after lunch messages work best in the rational and functionally —

Graph and some helpful rules emerge: Map and the “Uneven Impacts” together with the “A Day In the Life consumer’s typical day, then put it appreciating your consumer’s day. The daily life exercise is useful in

How does this help?
BRINGING IT HOME
SIMPLE RULES TO LIVE BY
Selling sustainability:

1. Offer consumers more value from sustainability
2. Build functional, emotional and social benefits
3. Timing matters

To remember:
THREE THINGS
The Sustainable Lifestyles Frontier Group is a collection of pioneering brands working to reveal the consumer value of sustainability. Together we are mapping benefits and barriers, and testing value activations. We have now begun live-testing of marketing and messages to see what works and what doesn’t. A benefits-based approach can transform your sustainability results and activate your consumers. If you are marketing sustainable products or trying to change consumer habits, get involved. Please contact Elisa Niemtzow to learn more about our approach.

About Futerra
We are the sustainability change agency. Using strategy and communications to imagine better businesses, better brands and ultimately a better world.

About BSR
BSR is a global nonprofit organization that works with its network of more than 250 members to build just and sustainable businesses. From its offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR develops sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration.

SELLING SUSTAINABILITY — WORKING TOGETHER