

The State of

Sustainable Business

Takeaways from our 10th Annual Survey of Sustainable Business Leaders

The world is changing at a rapid pace. New technologies, shifting cultural norms, evolving economic structures, and unprecedented environmental threats are reshaping the planet.

Our survey's purpose is to **communicate the sustainability issues that companies are most focused on today.** The results of our 10th annual questionnaire also offer a perspective on **how the major disruptions and trends shaping the broader ecosystem have influenced the business landscape.** Let's take a look.

Evolving Priorities

Corporate reputation was the #1 driver of sustainability efforts,

and with social topics under a larger spotlight than ever, companies are focusing on diversity, ethics, and similar issues.

76% and 71% of respondents consider **ethics/integrity and diversity/inclusion** high priorities, respectively.



Despite mass public attention through movements like #MeToo,

41% of companies report no change in their approach to women's empowerment issues.



Only **20%** of company leaders surveyed think efforts in the supply chain are effective,



but 75% are working on approaches and technologies to make progress.

Tech and AI Are Top of Mind

Artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and disruptive tech

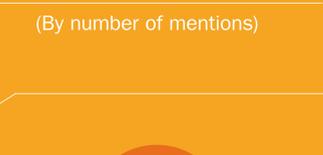
led the way when it came to prioritizing issues surrounding mega-trends,

but rising inequality, migration, and polarization lagged behind.



This disconnect shows companies may not yet fully appreciate or be

responding to the secondary impacts of these leading trends.



While companies have moved their human rights efforts beyond Tier 1 suppliers and their own operations, **they are not generally focusing on the human rights implications of their products and services,**

a disconnect considering the many critical issues emerging around the use of technology and AI.



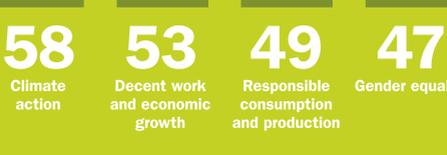
A New Sustainable Business Agenda

Companies are increasingly using the Sustainable Development Goals as their strategic north star in setting targets.



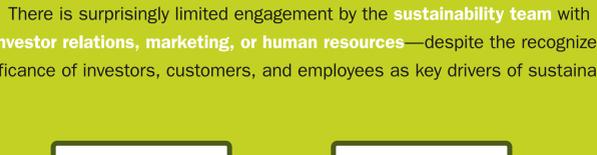
Companies are most focused on these UN Sustainable Development Goals:

(by number of mentions)



There is opportunity for more cross-functional collaboration:

There is surprisingly limited engagement by the sustainability team with **investor relations, marketing, or human resources**—despite the recognized significance of investors, customers, and employees as key drivers of sustainability.



Sustainability leaders are working to get traction with strategic planning and core business functions.



Most practitioners say that companies must put sustainability at the center of business strategy.



For full results and more detailed takeaways, download the full report at

www.bsr.org/sosb18

