Telling your sustainability story

“People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget what you made them feel.” Maya Angelo

**Sustainability storytelling** is a powerful tool for marketing your brand and product. If your business is currently working toward its sustainably goals, you likely already have the resources to tell your sustainably story. The people that make your staff, employees and other stakeholder are the voices of your stories.

**Tips for telling your story**

- Stories need to make an emotional connection
- Each sustainability story should fit into the overall sustainability narrative
- Have a clear and compelling message
- Have a beginning, middle and end...and often feature a hero with a clear task to accomplish
- Avoid jargon
- Language should be clear and memorable, so it can be re-told by listeners
- Set up the story for skimming, and for reading
- Have excellent photos that also tell the story
- Be strategic about your stories.
  - Audience
  - Timing
  - Message
  - Language
  - Media outlet
- Select stories that are consistent with your overall brand, with who you are and how you want others to experience your business.
- Select stories of people benefiting from their relationship with your business.
- Feature members of the groups you want to engage.
- Help your audience connect to what their peers believe or do relative to your business.
- Be clear about what your business stands for (and does not stand for)
- Be open and honest with your progress
- Be transparent with your mistakes
The market sector that your story is engaging

Green consumers can be your most desirable market sector of consumers.

- They represent about 25% of all consumers
- They are often leaders in communities with strong opinions
- Are early adopters
- They shop more frequently than average
- They have fierce brand loyalty
- They often pay more for brand that they trust
- They are materialistic...they pay attention to stuff
- They prefer to buy brand-new environmentally friendly to second hand.

Sustainability Best Practices: Marketing and Public Relations

- Integrate sustainability into your brand and client value propositions
- Integrate sustainability themes into your business or organization vision, mission, values, and goals
- Select sustainability communications content according to themes tied to the core of the business or organization
- Use electronic marketing whenever possible
- Do not embed/bury sustainability communications in web site
- Target key customer groups
- Receive and promote third party certification for sustainability practices
- Present sustainability themes and practices through personal stories written by staff and customers
- Use video and humor to communicate sustainability practices
- Use content that tells how together the business and customers can support mutual environmental and social responsibility values
- Link to the business’s sustainability specific practices and achievements such as in an annual report

Sustainability storytelling resources

- Communicating Sustainability to Guests
- Storytelling and green marketing: Walking the talk
- Sound Bites: Telling your sustainability story
- How to get 4.8 million views of your online video about sustainability
- 5 tips for creating a sustainability story that sticks
How to win the sustainability story wars: Q&A with Jonah Sachs

Speaking Sustainability: Your most powerful marketing tool? Your Sustainability Story

3 key ways to communicate sustainability without the ego

Three tips to use storytelling to sell sustainable products

A Guide to Strategic and Sustainable nonprofit storytelling

Study of S&P Reveals More Focus Needed on Sustainability Communications

Keys to Sustainability Leadership: Five Best Practices