




United Nations  
Global Compact

# CMO BLUEPRINT

## FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH







**“Never doubt that a small  
group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can  
change the world;  
indeed, it’s the only thing  
that ever has.”**

Margaret Mead



# FOREWORD

This year, as the United Nations Global Compact commemorates its 25th anniversary, we reflect on a powerful legacy of mobilizing a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders. Over the past 25 years, we have driven transformative change across geographies, helping businesses align profit with purpose.

Today, with more than 20,000 companies engaged worldwide, it is clear that leadership is more important than ever. Amid global crises and rising geopolitical uncertainty, the private sector has stepped up—demonstrating leadership with purpose, integrity and impact—but greater, accelerated action is still needed.

Now that the 2030 Agenda has passed its midpoint, the sobering reality is that we are only on track to achieve 17 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals. The stakes are high, and the time for incremental change has passed. We need to reinvent, rethink and reimagine everything—from business models to marketing strategies.

Marketing leaders have a key role to play in this transformation. As brand stewards, you are not only storytellers but catalysts of change. You have the power to align brand purpose with sustainability, communicate impact with credibility and inspire action across your organizations and industries.

This is not just about storytelling—it is about strategic leadership. We need Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) to shape business decisions, champion sustainability at the core and lead with data-backed commitments. In this era of rapid disruption, innovations such as Generative AI hold the potential to support leadership decision-making and accelerate sustainable transformation. Ninety-seven per cent of executives expect Gen AI to reshape their industries in the next five years. Let's ensure that sustainability is central to that evolution.

The *CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth* is a call to action and a practical resource. It reflects the insights and ambitions of marketing leaders around the world who are reimagining what marketing can achieve. Together, we can drive sustainable growth, rebuild trust and lead business toward a more just and resilient future.

The need for action has never been greater—and neither has the opportunity.

**Sanda Ojiambo**

Assistant Secretary General and CEO,  
United Nations Global Compact



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# INTRODUCTION

Amid global uncertainty and rapid change, CEOs are urgently seeking the next engine of business growth, while recognizing the rising expectation for business to help solve societal challenges. Our research reveals that 91 per cent of CEOs believe their role includes protecting the communities in which they operate, and 70 per cent see it as their responsibility to speak out on pressing societal issues. Yet many business leaders are stretched thin. They need the full strength of their executive teams — especially their Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) — to meet these rising expectations. CMOs are uniquely positioned to respond. As brand stewards, value creators and powerful communicators, marketers have the influence to shape perceptions, shift behavior and help align business and brand growth with long-term societal and environmental value.

Participants in the United Nations Global Compact's CMO Impact Think Lab overwhelmingly agree: marketing can and should play a far more significant role in developing and delivering corporate sustainability strategies. But to do so, the marketing function must evolve — moving from intention to action, from storytelling to storydoing.

While most marketers believe their brands have a responsibility to help people live more sustainably, many are still in the early stages of their sustainability journey. Sustainable Marketing 2030, a study conducted by the World Federation of Advertisers in partnership with Kantar's Sustainable Transformation Practice, confirms a clear gap: marketers often lack the tools, knowledge and influence to drive real progress. Our CMO interview findings showed barriers include the absence of a shared sustainability language, misalignment on short-term profits vs.

long-term value creation, limited access to data and lack of collaboration between CMOs and other C-suite leaders, especially Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs).

To unlock marketing's full potential, we must redefine growth itself — not as a pursuit of short-term gains, but as the creation of lasting value for people, planet and business. This means building bold partnerships, embracing breakthrough innovation and taking accountability for the change we seek.

Marketing can help businesses better understand their stakeholders, develop purpose-led strategies, drive sustainable consumer behavior and create internal momentum across teams and regions.

But CMOs cannot do it alone. CEO support and CSO partnership will be essential. And the marketing community needs clearer standards, shared best practices and industry-wide alignment to avoid fragmentation and duplication.

The CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth was developed in response to this call. Informed by the voices of global CMOs and leading industry organizations, it offers a unifying framework, practical guidance and a measurement approach to help CMOs take bold, coordinated action. Backed by the convening power of the UN Global Compact, this Blueprint aims to build a collaborative ecosystem that empowers marketers to lead with purpose, deliver on sustainability goals and accelerate business transformation at scale.

The time for debate is over. The time for action is now.

## OUR AMBITION

Through CMO interview findings and regional consultations, the UN Global Compact identified a critical need for a unified approach to sustainable growth and marketing. CMOs and marketing teams require a common language to define sustainability, a clear framework for best practices, a robust measurement system to track progress and access to case studies and resources to drive meaningful action.

With this in mind, the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth aims to:

- Establish a unified framework for integrating sustainability into marketing strategies— bringing clarity, consistency and global alignment on best practices. Centered around five key pillars, the framework offers actionable steps marketers can take to embed sustainability across growth strategy; brand strategy; innovation; communications, advertising and media; and collaboration and partnerships.
- Develop a measurement system, via the CMO Blueprint benchmark survey, that enables CMOs and senior marketing leaders to assess progress, identify gaps and accelerate transformation within their organizations.
- Foster a collaborative ecosystem, via the CMO Blueprint online resources hub, of brands, experts and stakeholders who share knowledge, case studies and resources — empowering marketing teams with the tools to innovate responsibly, tackle urgent global challenges and shape a more sustainable future for both business and society.





## The Business Case for Sustainable Growth

Sustainability is not a trade-off — it is a catalyst for long-term business success. Regardless of political setbacks, forward-thinking companies are embedding sustainability into their strategies not only to meet rising stakeholder expectations, but to unlock tangible business value. The case for sustainable growth offers five key benefits:

**Grow your business value:** By modifying existing offerings or developing, sustainability-focused products and services, companies can tap into new markets, meet evolving customer demands and grow revenue. Kantar BrandZ estimates sustainability's contribution to the brand value of the global top 100 brands at \$0.2 trillion today, with the potential to reach \$2.7 trillion by 2040 if brands fully leverage the potential of sustainability. A PwC report shows that products featuring sustainability attributes can achieve a revenue increase of 6 per cent to 25+ per cent over products without such emphasis. From reducing waste to optimizing resource use, sustainability can lower costs while advancing environmental and operational performance.

**Grow your relevance:** Brands that embed sustainability into their strategy enhance their relevance by building stronger trust and loyalty among consumers, employees and investors. According to Kantar's BrandZ, sustainability perceptions account for 45 per cent of a brand's corporate reputation, making this the most critical driver of consumer sentiment. Demonstrating strong ESG performance strengthens reputation and attracts top talent.

**Grow your advantage:** Innovating with sustainability in mind opens new markets, drives product differentiation and creates competitive advantage. Research from Boston Consulting Group estimates that companies incorporating sustainability are 1.4 times more likely to experience innovative breakthroughs.

**Grow your influence:** By backing communications, advertising and media with real sustainable actions, brands can boost cultural relevance, deepen engagement and grow their influence. In a market where authenticity matters, brands showing genuine commitment win consumer preference. Kantar BrandZ data shows a 0.7 correlation between sustainability perceptions and Demand Power, meaning sustainable brands drive stronger purchase intent. Trust is key, but losing it hurts. Kantar's Sustainability Sector Index data reveals a 0.9 correlation between perceived greenwashing and consumers dropping brands — highlighting the importance of tangible, substantiated sustainability messaging.

**Grow your reach:** Collaborations and partnerships are powerful impact multipliers for CMOs. By joining forces across sectors — with industry peers, government, NGOs and consumers — marketing leaders can scale their reach, accelerate sustainability efforts and move with greater speed and efficiency. These partnerships can unlock new business value and help reshape the future of entire industries. In fact, 73 per cent of business leaders say they're willing to collaborate with competitors on net-zero goals — according to a report by Baker McKenzie, underscoring the strategic advantage of partnership in delivering impact at scale.

Together, these areas demonstrate that **sustainability is not just good for people and the planet — it's smart business.**

# THE SDGs Explained for Business

## What are they?

In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all. The 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) — also known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — lay out the most ambitious blueprint to date, calling on business, government, civil society and international organizations to work collectively towards peace and prosperity for people and the planet.

The 17 SDGs include goals to:

- end extreme poverty and hunger;
- promote access to quality education for all children;
- combat inequality and discrimination;
- promote health and well-being for all people everywhere;
- protect our planet from climate change and environmental degradation;
- create decent work for all and improve living standards;
- ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy worldwide.

## Why are they important?

At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals is a universal, long-term vision to create a better future for all while protecting the planet. The SDGs are unique as they offer an integrated approach to addressing our world's most pressing problems, recognizing that many social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected and require holistic solutions. The SDGs also place great emphasis on collaboration across countries and stakeholders, promoting an inclusive approach to problem solving.

While progress has been made, the 2024 SDG Progress Report shows that currently only 17 per cent of SDG metrics are on track to be met by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic dealt a significant blow to SDG progress, exacerbating inequalities,

particularly gender inequalities, stalling economic growth, testing already fragile public health systems and diverting resources away from sustainable development.

Not achieving the SDGs could have significant consequences. Many people continue to live in extreme poverty, and global hunger has returned to levels not seen since 2005. Meanwhile, each passing year surpasses the previous year as the “hottest year on record”. These conditions, if not addressed, have the potential to lead to significant instability and conflict in the years to come — and turn the world into a much less viable place in which to conduct business.

Investing in the SDGs is an investment in a more stable, equitable, peaceful and resilient future.

## Implications for Business

Businesses are critical to the successful achievement of the SDGs. The SDGs provide all businesses with a new lens through which to translate the world's needs and ambitions into business solutions.

These global challenges — ranging from climate, water and food crises to poverty, conflict and inequality — are in need of solutions that the private sector can deliver, representing a large and growing market for business innovation and collaboration. A recent McKinsey report found that growing demand for net-zero offerings could generate more than \$12 trillion of annual sales by 2030. Such a transformation of the global economy could create significant growth potential for climate solutions and green jobs.

Aligning business strategies with the SDGs is not only good for people and the planet — it is good for business. Businesses that integrate the SDGs as part of their sustainability plans often see longer-term growth and increased resiliency. Aligning business with the SDGs also ensures that businesses remain at the forefront of building the economy of the future.



# 5 PILLARS OF ACTION

**GROWTH  
STRATEGY**



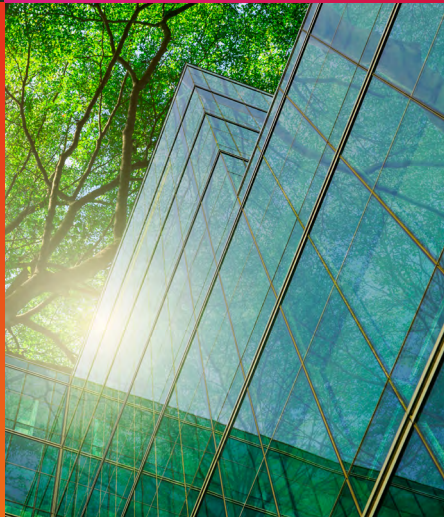
**BRAND  
STRATEGY**



**INNOVATION**



**COMMUNICATIONS,  
ADVERTISING  
AND MEDIA**



**COLLABORATION  
AND  
PARTNERSHIPS**

# GROWTH STRATEGY

## **Advocate for higher ambition**

CMOs have a unique opportunity to lead by example in championing sustainability as a driver of growth, not just a compliance measure. This means communicating the business case for sustainable practices, demonstrating how they create long-term value and influencing leadership teams to integrate sustainability into core business objectives.

## **Assess the positive and negative impacts of your growth strategy on the SDGs**

A comprehensive impact assessment helps organizations identify areas where they are driving positive change and areas where they need to mitigate harm. By mapping the company's value chain against the SDGs, CMOs can pinpoint strategic interventions that enhance sustainability performance.

## **Use a sustainability framework to set and measure growth goals and KPIs**

Embedding sustainability into growth targets requires clear measurement. By adopting frameworks such as the UN SDG Impact Standards, companies can track progress in the short, medium and long term, ensuring that sustainability goals align with financial and operational success.

## **Embed consumer/customer-centric and multi-stakeholder sustainability insights into the growth strategy**

Sustainable growth strategies should be rooted in a deep understanding of evolving consumer preferences and societal expectations. Regular stakeholder engagement, market research and trend analysis will help refine strategies to ensure they are both impactful and commercially viable.

## **Advocate to make sustainability commitments and targets part of the performance appraisal and bonus scheme**

To embed sustainability into company culture, marketing leaders should push for sustainability metrics to be included in executive and employee performance reviews, tying incentives such as bonuses to environmental and social impact outcomes.

## **Deliver the sustainability growth, value creation narrative to inspire all stakeholders and catalyze change**

Effective storytelling is critical in making sustainability resonate. CMOs can craft compelling narratives that illustrate the company's sustainability journey, highlighting success stories and demonstrating the financial, social and environmental returns of responsible business practices.



# ZESPRI

## Growing Business by Growing Good

### CONTEXT

Zespri exists to help people, communities and the planet thrive through the goodness of kiwifruit. At its core, the company believes that doing good and doing well go hand in hand — creating value for both society and business. As a global marketer of one of the world's most nutritious fruits, Zespri recognized that to sustain long-term growth, it needed to embed sustainability into every facet of its business strategy.

In 2020, Zespri formalized this commitment with the launch of an ambitious sustainability strategy and framework focused on health and nutrition, environmental stewardship and social responsibility. At a time when the global agri-food system faces deep contradictions — widespread malnutrition, increasing emissions and strained farmer livelihoods — Zespri chose to take a leadership role. Its mission: to create long-term value for growers while building a fairer, more sustainable food system.

The company understood that sustainability couldn't remain a standalone initiative. It needed to be integrated into the growth strategy and business model — driving innovation, shaping consumer engagement and influencing how value is measured and shared.

### ACTION

Zespri's growth actions are guided by a powerful belief: by driving good for the world, the company can grow good for business. This principle is reflected in its strategic alignment with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), focusing on both nutritious food and sustainable communities.

To embed sustainability into business growth, Zespri employed a Double Materiality Matrix and the Cambridge Value Framework, integrating sustainability KPIs directly into the company's planning and reporting cycles. These tools enabled Zespri to assess both the positive and negative impacts of its growth strategy across the value chain — informing decision-making on innovation, resource use, packaging and stakeholder engagement.

To ensure sustainability remained a core driver of performance, Zespri tied sustainability outcomes to business incentives. The company's EBIT cap model in New Zealand guarantees fair returns to growers, while sustainability-linked KPIs are embedded into brand performance reviews and long-term value targets. Marketing, innovation and leadership teams are measured not only by financial results but also by their contributions to health, environmental and social outcomes.

## IMPACT

The results have been transformative. Since 2016, Zespri has doubled its revenue to over NZ\$5 billion and is on track to reach six billion kiwifruit eating occasions by 2025. The brand has become the #1 fruit brand across 15 markets, while simultaneously achieving a 13 per cent reduction in total emissions and reaching 80 per cent compostable packaging, with industry-first TUV-certified home compostable label.

For growers, the value is equally clear: average orchard gate returns have doubled and the EBIT cap model ensures profits are shared fairly. Social impact has deepened through the Te Kaha initiative and global education campaigns, and Zespri continues to track time-bound targets across its sustainability commitments — from climate to community development.

By delivering a compelling value creation narrative — centered on health, equity and environmental stewardship — Zespri has successfully mobilized employees, partners and consumers around a shared vision of growth.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Purpose is not a trade-off — it's a growth accelerator.** Zespri's growth proves that long-term value creation and sustainability can reinforce each other.
- 2. Systems, not slogans, drive change.** Tools like the Double Materiality Matrix and integrated KPIs helped embed sustainability into core business decisions.
- 3. Collaboration is a catalyst.** Zespri's partnerships with governments, NGOs and industry leaders accelerated both impact and credibility.
- 4. Innovation must serve both people and the planet.** From regenerative agriculture to compostable labels, Zespri made sustainability central to innovation.
- 5. Real-world tensions inspire real action.** Zespri's growth strategy responded directly to the contradictions in the global food system — and offered a better way forward.





# INTREPID TRAVEL

## Doubling Down on Values Earns Respect and Revenue

### CONTEXT

Sustainability has been at the core of Intrepid Travel's business model since its inception. As the world's largest adventure tourism company and a certified B Corporation, Intrepid is renowned for its commitment to responsible travel. This includes protecting nature and animal welfare, supporting local livelihoods, taking steps to address its climate impact and doubling down on diversity and inclusion.

While some companies have scaled back their sustainability and diversity efforts, Intrepid has positioned these values as central pillars of its growth strategy.

### ACTION

Intrepid consistently advocates for higher ambition, demonstrating how sustainable practices drive positive value, transforming them from mere risk mitigation or reporting exercises into key value creators.

**Climate Initiatives:** Intrepid committed to carbon neutrality in 2010 and was the first global tour operator to set science-based targets aligned with a 1.5°C future.

In 2024, the company introduced carbon labelling to its itineraries, offering customers transparent insights into the environmental impact of their Intrepid trip. This initiative followed a survey showing that 60 per cent of travelers prefer companies with transparent sustainability efforts and 58 per cent would adjust their plans to reduce their carbon footprint. Additionally, Intrepid developed a free, open-source guide to help other operators measure their own trip emissions.

**Diversity Initiatives:** In 2021, Intrepid launched new Ethical Marketing Guidelines to expand the representation of marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, plus-size, disabled and LGBTQIA+ communities. These guidelines encompass five core commitments and 25 measurable actions related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Programs like the annual BIPOC mentorship trip and Diversifying Travel Media initiative support emerging content creators and travel writers.

By 2024, Intrepid had achieved 21 of its 25 DEI commitments, including:

- 58 per cent of influencers were BIPOC creators.
- 52 per cent of writers for The Good Times were BIPOC.
- Over \$200,000 had been invested in BIPOC-owned businesses, doubling its initial commitment.

Intrepid's 2025 "DEI Matters Now More Than Ever" campaign reached close to 20,000 people, marking its best performance on LinkedIn and garnering coverage in global business and marketing publications.



## IMPACT

Broader business results prove that doubling down on core values is working, with the business in 2024:

- Exceeding financial goals, earning over \$600 million in annual revenue;
- Achieving its highest B Corp recertification score, among the top 20 per cent of large impact-led brands globally;
- Achieving an 82.5 NPS score, surpassing its record for customer loyalty and satisfaction;

Intrepid's 2024 staff engagement survey results were at best-in-class levels, with an eNPS score of 64, 98 per cent of staff recommending Intrepid as a great place to work and 80 per cent saying Intrepid's purpose-driven focus is a reason they continue to work in the business.

Intrepid ties achieving all of its goals — both profit and purpose — to its performance appraisal and bonus scheme.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Lean into your values and purpose:** This creates greater value for customers, your business and the industry.
- 2. Be transparent and accountable:** Intrepid's Carbon Labelling and Ethical Marketing Guidelines are highly specific and measurable.
- 3. Share learnings for the greater good:** By openly sharing its frameworks, Intrepid encourages others in the tourism industry to follow suit and adapt their own sustainability and diversity practices. This approach fosters industry-wide progress.

Intrepid's case highlights how a commitment to sustainability and diversity can drive long-term success, build trust with customers and ensure a positive social impact.



# BRAND STRATEGY

## **Define why your brand exists beyond profit and how it supports one or more SDGs**

Consumers are increasingly drawn to brands with a meaningful purpose. Companies should define a purpose that extends beyond financial gain and aligns with relevant SDGs, creating a clear link between their business objectives and broader societal impact.

## **Translate corporate sustainability goals into actionable brand-level commitments**

A corporate sustainability agenda must cascade into specific, brand-level initiatives. This means aligning sustainability commitments with consumer expectations and industry drivers, ensuring that each brand within a portfolio contributes to the overall sustainability strategy.

## **Integrate sustainability KPIs into your brand performance metrics**

Traditional brand performance metrics (e.g., brand equity, market share) should be expanded to include sustainability indicators, such as carbon footprint reduction, social impact and ethical sourcing. This ensures that sustainability is a fundamental measure of brand success.

## **Align resources and funding with the strategy**

To truly integrate sustainability into brand strategy, companies can start by allocating budgets accordingly. This includes funding for sustainable product innovations, responsible advertising campaigns and partnerships that advance social and environmental impact.



# DIAGEO

## Fuses Sustainability with Brand Identity

### CONTEXT

Diageo understands that water is not just an ingredient, but a vital resource for both its business and the communities it serves. With water stewardship as a longstanding priority, Diageo is committed to preserving this critical resource, particularly in water-stressed regions. The company integrated water-saving technologies across its brands, partnered locally to restore watersheds and launched replenishment projects to protect its supply chain and surrounding communities.

Amid the broader push, Don Julio — the largest premium tequila and most loved spirit in Mexico with a track record in water stewardship — emerged as the perfect brand to carry Diageo's sustainability mission. Using Diageo's "&" strategy, combining brand and sustainability, Don Julio sought to turn water into a core part of its identity. Consumer perception also shaped this choice — research showed growing concern about sustainability, especially water, making Don Julio's efforts a compelling match for consumer values.

### ACTION

In 2022, a brand sustainability assessment was commissioned, involving multi-functional teams from marketing, supply and corporate relations. The assessment identified key brand impact areas and created a roadmap of action, including significant investment in water stewardship in Jalisco. Recognizing that genuine action must precede consumer communication, the team prioritized authentic brand initiatives.

Diageo implemented advanced irrigation techniques and worked with partner organizations to replenish water in Jalisco's parched soils, laying a strong sustainability foundation. With deep ties to the region and a history of water replenishment, Don Julio was well-positioned to lead. Consumer insights showed rising demand for sustainability, with social media discussions on water sustainability tripling, making Don Julio the ideal brand to drive these efforts.

Don Julio's brand sustainability strategy was developed in collaboration with the global brand team, Mexico sustainability team and external partners, deciding to focus on water given its material impact. An external water specialist was engaged to assess Don Julio's water actions across operations and the supply chain, creating a framework for substantiating water claims and mitigating greenwashing risks. This claims framework also served as a key input for further detailing Don Julio's strategic marketing mix.

To introduce the strategy to consumers, Diageo launched a campaign in Mexico, highlighted by an art installation during Mexico City Art Week, blending water sustainability with Mexican culture. The immersive campaign sparked conversations, reaching even wider audiences through World Water Day.

Recognizing sustainability as a long-term commitment, Don Julio developed a three-year roadmap, using Diageo's three-step approach (brand, regional and cross-functional teams) to identify focus areas that resonated with the brand, business, consumers and stakeholders. By embedding sustainability into its brand positioning, Don Julio amplified its purpose, ensuring long-term consumer trust and loyalty.



## IMPACT

Since 2022, Don Julio's sustainability efforts have been tracked through Diageo's Brand Sustainability Scorecard, with its score rising to 124 in 2024, well above the category average and demonstrating significant progress in brand sustainability association. Since launching the first activation in Mexico in 2025, the brand strategy has led to:

- 16 million impressions, +28,000 average organic reach;
- 8.48 per cent engagement rate (+4.5 per cent average);
- 100 per cent positive sentiment and category-leading differentiation;
- Strong brand equity growth and sustainability metric performance (significantly above average);
- The initiative strengthened supply chain resilience in Jalisco and delivered tangible benefits to local communities, proving sustainability fuels both profit and progress.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Align corporate ambition with brand authenticity:** Brands are most effective when they focus on their most material impact areas and ensure actions come before advertising. Don Julio's journey shows that embedding sustainability into a brand's core values turns storytelling into a movement. Diageo's value chain efforts laid the foundation, while the brand's local roots made the message resonate authentically.
- 2. Sustainability messaging must be backed by action:** Consumers are increasingly savvy — for sustainability messaging to be effective, it must be grounded in real, tangible actions.
- 3. Early collaboration with legal and external experts:** Engaging legal and external specialists early, particularly in emerging areas like water-related claims, ensures credibility and mitigates risks.
- 4. Cultural relevance drives deeper consumer engagement:** Find disruptive ways to connect sustainability with consumer passions — Don Julio's success in Mexico shows that cultural relevance is key to breaking through and creating meaningful connections.
- 5. Commitment is key:** The three-year roadmap highlights that sustainability is not just a trend for Don Julio — it's a long-term commitment to creating lasting change.



# NEDBANK

## Redefining Brand Strategy to Thrive in a Competitive Landscape

### CONTEXT

The banking sector in South Africa has seen rapid transformation in the past two decades. Traditionally dominated by four major banks, the landscape now includes over ten competitors, including digital banks like TymeBank and fintech players like Capitec, which cater to younger, tech-savvy consumers and the underbanked. This surge in competition created significant market challenges for established players like Nedbank, particularly as newer entrants captured over 25 per cent of market share.

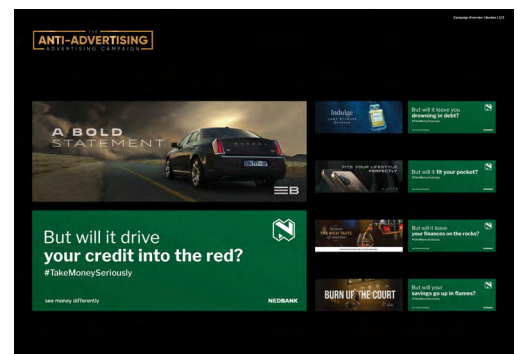
Nedbank's brand positioning in 2010, which focused on being a leader in financial expertise, had become too generic and lacked distinction. Additionally, the bank was perceived as elitist and inaccessible, especially by younger and underbanked populations. With its market share at risk, Nedbank recognised the need for a strategic pivot to remain relevant and competitive.

### ACTION

To respond to these challenges, Nedbank launched a comprehensive brand strategy overhaul in 2015, which was unveiled in 2017. The process, which spanned two years, involved company-wide consultations, consumer research and alignment across all business units. Nedbank's brand strategy was grounded in its sustainability strategy, leveraging its historical reputation as the "Green Bank" and focusing on environmental responsibility, alongside financial expertise.

Nedbank's new brand positioning emphasized its role as a force for good, with the tagline "See Money Differently." The bank redefined its purpose to not only deliver financial services but to use its expertise to create meaningful social and environmental impact. Key brand initiatives included redefined client value propositions (CVPs), a focus on sustainable growth and innovations like the Greenbacks rewards program, which incentivises responsible financial decisions.

Additionally, Nedbank launched impactful marketing campaigns, including the "Money Secrets" campaign aimed at breaking societal taboos around financial discussions and the "Anti-Advertising Advertising" campaign, which critiqued consumerism in favor of more sustainable financial practices.





## IMPACT

The rebranding efforts had a significant impact on both Nedbank's brand metrics and its business performance:

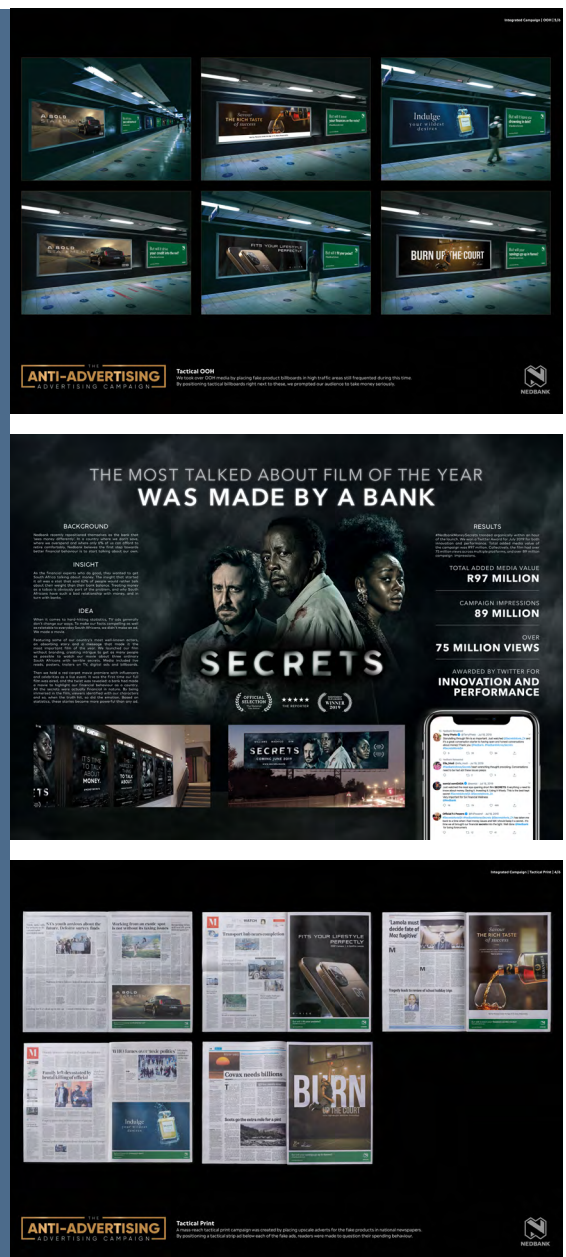
- **Brand Preference** increased from 17 per cent to 28 per cent, signaling greater consumer preference and improved positioning in the market;
- **Brand Usage** rose from 15 per cent to 21 per cent, translating into higher adoption of Nedbank's products and services;
- **Brand Loyalty** grew from 65 per cent to 75 per cent, demonstrating a stronger connection between the brand and its customers.

Despite the rise of new competitors, Nedbank's market share remained stable between 11 per cent and 13 per cent, outperforming expectations, particularly when other traditional banks lost market share. This success was attributed to its focus on sustainable, purpose-driven banking rather than mimicking the digital-first approach of competitors.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Brand purpose leads long-term success:** A brand purpose-driven approach isn't just for short-term gains. It serves as a strategic compass for long-term business direction, aligning innovation and strategy across the organisation.
- 2. Simplicity and focus are key:** In large organisations with diverse business units, a clear, purpose-driven brand provides simplicity, focus and alignment, which is crucial for managing complex market dynamics.
- 3. Sustainability as a differentiator:** Sustainability isn't just a trend; when done correctly, it can be a powerful brand differentiator. However, it must be integrated into tangible business deliverables and resonate with consumers, particularly those focused on short-term benefits.
- 4. Communicating sustainability:** The concept of sustainability can be abstract, so marketers should make it accessible and relevant to consumers. For Nedbank, this meant avoiding overused terms like "sustainability" and instead focusing on the practical benefits of sustainable financial behavior.
- 5. Broader view of sustainability:** For sustainability to resonate, it needs to go beyond environmental concerns and include economic prosperity, which remains a primary focus for many African consumers and businesses.

By embracing a brand strategy that was both purpose-driven and focused on tangible, sustainable outcomes, Nedbank successfully navigated a highly competitive market, strengthening its position as a leading financial institution in South Africa.





# INNOVATION

## **Align resources, investment and funding to sustainable innovations**

CMOs should advocate for sustainability-driven innovation budgets, ensuring that investment priorities reflect the company's commitment to social and environmental responsibility. This means focusing on areas with the most significant material impact, such as packaging, supply chain and digital transformation.

## **Embed customer and consumer sustainability insights into product development and innovation strategies**

Innovation should be guided by what customers value and expect in sustainable products and services. Conducting consumer research and leveraging sustainability insights will help brands create solutions that both minimize negative impact and meet evolving market demands.

## **Educate, engage and incentivize employees to develop sustainable innovations**

Building a culture of sustainability-driven innovation requires empowering employees across departments. This includes training programs, recognition initiatives and incentives for teams that contribute to sustainable product or service development.

## **Develop business models that enable sustainable behavior and breakthrough innovation**

CMOs should explore new business models that drive systemic change, such as circular economy solutions, regenerative business practices and shared-value partnerships. These models can unlock new revenue streams while advancing sustainability goals.

## **Establish innovation and portfolio simplification targets that align future products and services with sustainability ambitions**

Sustainability should guide portfolio decisions, ensuring that new product launches and service offerings align with sustainability commitments. This may involve phasing out unsustainable products, prioritizing materials with lower environmental impact and designing for longevity and recyclability.

# NATURA

## Ekos Castanha Concentrated Moisturizer — Regenerative Innovation



### CONTEXT

In 2023, Natura, Brazil's largest cosmetics company, reinforced its "Commitment to Life," focusing on three key pillars: combating the climate crisis and protecting the Amazon, advancing human rights and shifting towards circularity and regeneration. These goals aimed to regenerate ecosystems, support communities and enhance well-being, aligning with Natura's mission.

As part of this vision, Natura's marketing team launched the Ekos Castanha Concentrated Moisturizer, designed to reduce waste, greenhouse gas emissions and generate positive social impact while maintaining Natura's high standards of quality, safety and performance. Marketing's challenge was to position the product to resonate with consumers and address potential skepticism, ensuring it aligned with both sustainability objectives and consumer desires.

### ACTION

The development of the Ekos Castanha Concentrated Moisturizer was a response to Natura's regenerative journey. After three years of research, the R&D team created a unique formula that requires consumers to add water at home, offering an innovative approach to product usage. This reduced the product's water content during production and shipping, leading to a smaller bottle that used 81 per cent less plastic, produced 55 per cent less waste than traditional refills and cut transport emissions by 38 per cent. The marketing strategy focused on positioning the product as a global innovation in the cosmetics market, reinforcing Natura's commitment to sustainability and ensuring consumers embraced it.

Research revealed a clear consumer insight: people valued sustainability but wouldn't compromise on performance or convenience. Many were intrigued by eco-friendly beauty products but hesitant about unconventional formats. Marketing seized this insight to shape the product's narrative, focusing on two critical barriers: doubts about efficacy and reluctance to add water.

- **Highlighting performance:** Marketing emphasized the product's proven results to counter perceptions of reduced effectiveness. They showcased clinical data demonstrating that the Brazil nut oil-based formula, sourced from the Amazon, improved skin texture by 14.5 per cent in 28 days and provided 24-hour hydration. Testimonials and before-and-after visuals reinforced these claims, positioning the moisturizer as a premium, high-performing option despite its concentrated form.
- **Reframing convenience and impact:** The extra step of adding water risked being seen as inconvenient. Marketing reframed it as a simple, empowering ritual, tying it to the product's broader purpose. The campaign, "A New Way to Care," highlighted how this step supported sustainability — less plastic, lower emissions — and connected consumers to social good. It spotlighted the product's support for 689 Amazonian forest guardian families and 10 recycling cooperatives, turning a potential drawback into a meaningful story of impact.

The campaign leaned on Natura's existing channels — social media, e-commerce and direct sales reps — to deliver this message. Marketing also ensured clear instructions and visuals accompanied the product, easing adoption. By focusing on performance and purpose, they transformed consumer hesitations into points of pride.

## IMPACT

**Business** — As a global innovation, the product outperformed the expected sales by 100 per cent in the first three months. The moisturizer provides proven efficacy, improving skin texture and hydration. It also presents a new formulation concept aligned with sustainability trends and reflects Natura's commitment to conscious consumption and sustainability.

**People** — The product strengthened local entrepreneurship, benefiting 689 forest guardian families across five states and supports the ethical Brazil nut oil supply chain certified by UEBT. It generates direct income for communities, with 700,000 Brazil nuts estimated to be used for the total production. It also impacts 10 recycling cooperatives in northern Brazil, benefiting 195 families and contributing to sustainable post-consumer plastic recycling. The packaging includes Braille, emphasizing accessibility.

**Planet** — 81 per cent less plastic used in packaging and 55 per cent less waste compared to conventional options. GHG emissions from transport are 38 per cent lower. The product uses 100 per cent recycled or Amazon river-sourced plastics and 95 per cent of its ingredients are natural.

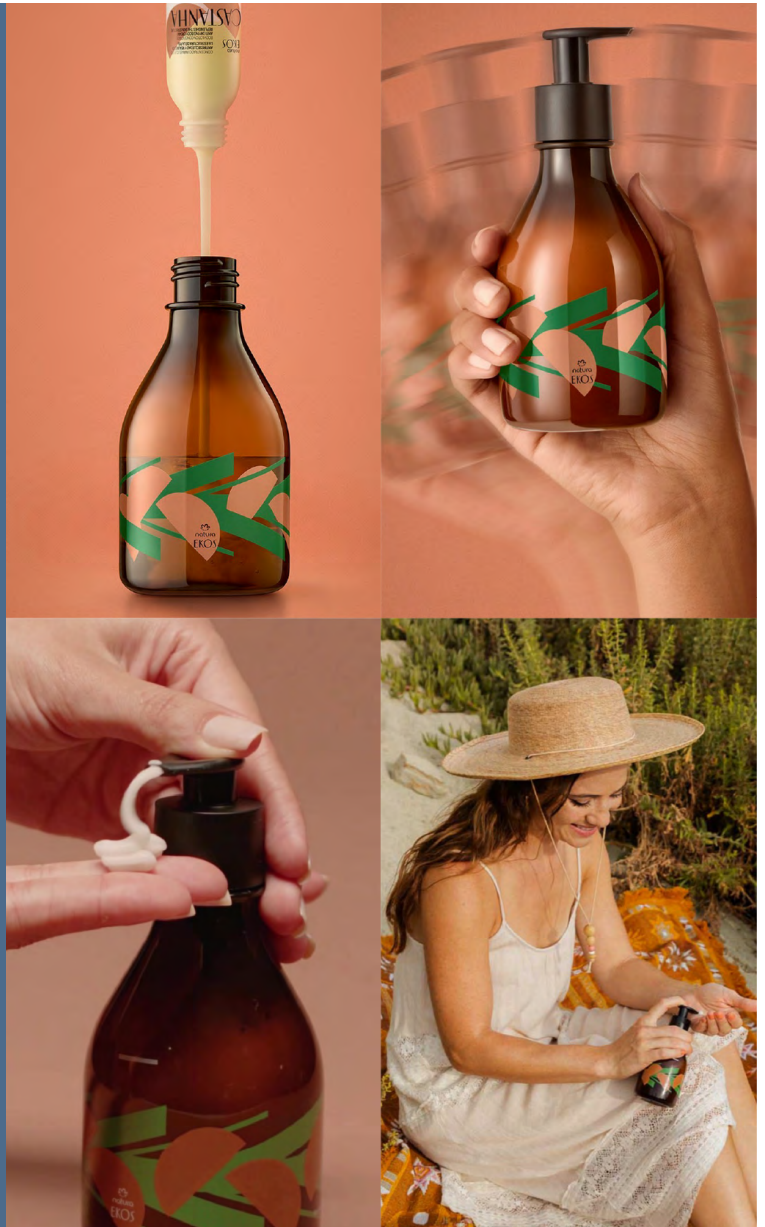
The product innovation contributed primarily to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 8, 9, 10 and 12, as well as to the achievement of Natura's public goals of the Commitment to Life.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

This case offers practical lessons for marketing leaders:

- 1. Innovate with purpose:** Embed sustainability into product development to create resilient, future-ready products that align with consumer preferences and deliver long-term value;
- 2. Prioritize consumer desires:** Understand customer motivations and their willingness to engage in product creation;
- 3. Amplify existing insights:** Consumers already care about sustainability and performance — marketing's job is to connect those dots, not invent them;
- 4. Shape perception:** Overcome barriers like skepticism or inconvenience with performance data and emotional appeals (e.g., social impact);
- 5. Tell a unified story:** Align product benefits with the brand's mission, making sustainability the core selling point.

Natura's success shows that marketing can turn a bold idea into a market win by listening to consumers, addressing their concerns, prioritizing sustainability and highlighting the product's unique value.





# SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

## Fast-Tracking Customer Adoption and Global Decarbonization

### CONTEXT

Schneider Electric's purpose is to empower everyone to make the most of our energy and resources, bridging progress and sustainability. As the world accelerates toward decarbonization, electrical distribution networks face increasing pressure to reduce their environmental footprint. A significant barrier lies in medium voltage (MV) switchgears, which traditionally rely on SF6 gas — a potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential 24,300 times greater than CO2. The EU's F-gas directive, aimed at regulating fluorinated gases to combat climate change, has intensified the need to eliminate SF6. Customers across industries, from utilities to manufacturers, are seeking sustainable alternatives that meet both regulatory requirements and their own decarbonization goals, amplifying the demand for innovative solutions.

### ACTION

Adopting new technology often comes with resistance to change. Barriers included resistance to change from customers accustomed to SF6-based systems, concerns over reliability and performance and a lack of awareness about the environmental impact of traditional switchgears.

Schneider Electric applied an agile approach to the development of AirSeT MV switchgear, conducting pilots with selected clients to gather critical feedback. This iterative process resulted in a product that is not only sustainable but also performs better than non-sustainable alternatives. The next step was to ensure that the customer and stakeholder ecosystem was set up in a way that speeds up adoption. Marketing efforts focused on a two-phase strategy:

Initial communication focused on education, raising awareness of SF6's environmental harm and highlighting AirSeT's tangible benefits, such as emissions reduction, cost savings and enhanced safety. At the same time, deploying third-party research and thought leadership positioned Schneider as a trusted innovator. Spotlighting innovators and leveraging gamification to educate drove high engagement.

The post-launch marketing strategy leveraged insights from the launch, reinforcing the message with compelling proof points, clear benefits, and customer testimonials to drive demand and deliver commercial impact. Marketing showcased customer testimonials, awards like the iF Design Award to verify design excellence and product benefits beyond sustainability. A series of early adopter pilot installations further helped build trust and speed.

To further speed up adoption, Schneider leveraged a broad ecosystem, collaborating with industry associations, regulators and local markets. The EU Life Program provided financial support and credibility, enabling impactful media campaigns and pilot expansions. Partnerships with distributors and installers were strengthened through training programs, ensuring seamless integration into existing systems. Internally, cross-functional alignment between R&D, marketing and sales teams, paired with employee sustainability training, unified efforts toward AirSeT's success.

## IMPACT

The introduction of AirSeT resulted in significant environmental and business outcomes. Each installation of AirSeT prevents 75,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, contributing to global decarbonization efforts. The product's extended lifespan (from 20 to 40 years) and lower maintenance costs (20–30 per cent savings) have made it highly attractive to customers, further driving its adoption.

In addition to its environmental impact, AirSeT's success in the market was underscored by several prestigious industry awards, including the iF Design Awards (2020 and 2024), the Industrial Energy Efficiency Award from Hannover Messe and recognition as one of ICEF's Top 10 Innovations.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

The success of AirSeT demonstrates how marketing can be a powerful driver of innovation adoption. Several key lessons can be drawn from Schneider Electric's approach:

- 1. Early engagement is critical:** Engaging customers early through pilot programs provides valuable feedback and helps build trust in new technologies;
- 2. Clear communication of tangible benefits:** While sustainability is a key selling point, communicating the practical benefits — such as cost savings, safety improvements and enhanced performance — is essential to drive adoption;
- 3. Collaboration is key:** Building an ecosystem of support, including partnerships with regulators, industry associations and distributors, is crucial for accelerating the adoption of new technologies;
- 4. Agility and iteration:** An agile, iterative approach allows for continuous improvement of the product and ensures that it meets the real-world needs of customers;
- 5. Recognition validates innovation:** Industry awards and third-party recognition validate the product's excellence, helping to further build trust and credibility with customers.

By replacing SF<sub>6</sub> with pure air and vacuum technology, Schneider Electric has set a new standard for MV switchgear. AirSeT not only contributes to a cleaner, more sustainable future for electrical distribution networks but also showcases how innovation can drive both environmental and business success.



Make sustainable  
**IMPACT**  
with SF<sub>6</sub>-free RM AirSeT

High power reliability with a low carbon footprint? RM AirSeT combines pure-air technology reinforced for integrating renewables with advanced digital features to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy distribution.

Be an Impact Maker

Life Is On | **Schneider Electric**

# COMMUNICATIONS, ADVERTISING AND MEDIA

## **Equip the marketing team with understanding, regulatory knowledge and tools to proactively address perceived greenwashing**

With increasing scrutiny on sustainability claims, CMOs play a critical role at enabling their marketing teams with the necessary knowledge and frameworks to communicate sustainability credibly. This includes using verified third-party certifications, full value-chain transparency and robust data to support claims.

## **Promote sustainable lifestyles and demonstrate accessible circular solutions at scale**

Brands have the power to inspire sustainable behavior through marketing and advertising. Campaigns should go beyond messaging to showcase tangible, accessible solutions that empower consumers to make sustainable choices.

## **Accurately portray all people across gender, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity and religion**

Representation matters. Advertising and media strategies should reflect the diversity of the real world, ensuring inclusive storytelling that resonates with diverse audiences and avoids stereotypes.

## **Measure, assess and reduce the carbon footprint of marketing operations**

Marketing activities — from digital advertising to event sponsorships — have an environmental impact. CMOs should implement carbon measurement tools, set reduction targets and explore low-carbon alternatives in media planning and content production.

## **Integrate sustainability criteria into your procurement policy and communication process**

Marketing teams should collaborate with procurement to ensure that agencies, media partners and service providers align with sustainability goals. This may involve vetting partners based on their environmental impact, ethical labor practices and commitment to sustainable operations.



# L'ORÉAL

## L'Oréal's Digital Sustainability Journey

### CONTEXT

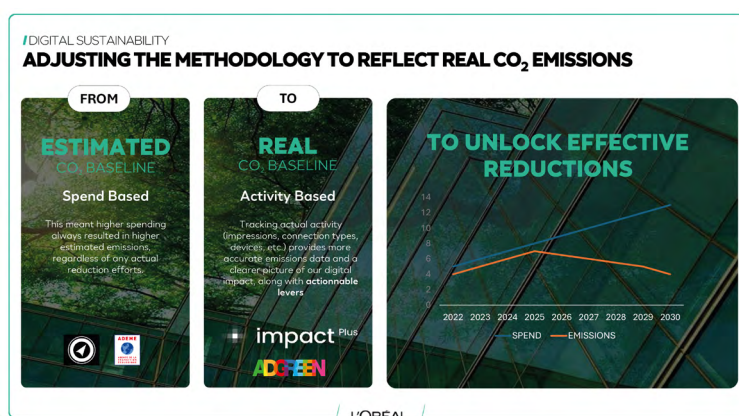
For nearly two decades, L'Oréal has placed a strong emphasis on addressing climate change by working to decarbonize its entire greenhouse gas (GHG) emission footprint. As part of its "L'Oréal for the Future" program, the company has focused on reducing the environmental impact of its digital activities, particularly in the areas of media, content and websites. This challenge is exacerbated by the increasing scale of digital media, which significantly contributes to carbon emissions.

To make progress, L'Oréal identified three core levers for change: Measurement, Optimization and Partnerships. As one of the world's largest advertisers, L'Oréal is committed to leading the industry in measuring CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>eq) emissions generated by digital activities and implementing strategies to reduce their impact. Collaborating with industry bodies like WFA and Ad Net Zero, as well as startups in the digital ecosystem, L'Oréal has made great strides in measuring and mitigating digital carbon emissions, focusing on key partnerships to reduce its footprint in digital media, content production and website operations.

### ACTION

L'Oréal's strategy to achieve digital sustainability was approached in two phases. The first phase involved piloting the Impact Plus Sustaintech solution, testing more than 100 campaigns across 40 markets to benchmark emissions and identify reduction opportunities. This phase was pivotal in understanding the digital footprint across the company's vast portfolio.

In 2024, L'Oréal launched the second phase, implementing the Impact Plus Environmental Sustainability Platform (ESP) across all digital media campaigns. This platform's primary goal was to measure the carbon emissions baseline across every campaign and 37 global brands. With this phase, L'Oréal aimed to identify key reduction levers and significantly reduce emissions without compromising the effectiveness of their media campaigns or brand perception.



## IMPACT

L'Oréal has successfully developed a scalable approach that reduces the carbon footprint of its digital advertising campaigns by up to 20 per cent. The company identified four primary ways to achieve this without compromising the effectiveness of its ad campaigns:

- **Creative weight optimization:** By reducing the resolution of ad files, L'Oréal lowered the strain on networks, servers and consumer devices, achieving a potential 30 per cent reduction in carbon emissions while maintaining performance.
- **Duration and view time:** Adjusting how long consumers engage with ads helped lower the carbon impact by reducing unnecessary energy consumption.
- **Device and connection type optimization:** Targeting ads based on device type and encouraging Wi-Fi usage over mobile data led to significant reductions in carbon emissions, yielding an average reduction of 10 per cent based on geographic factors.
- **Carbon intensity planning:** Adjusting ad delivery based on times when carbon intensity is lower (e.g., when renewable energy is more widely available) also contributed to the reduction of emissions.

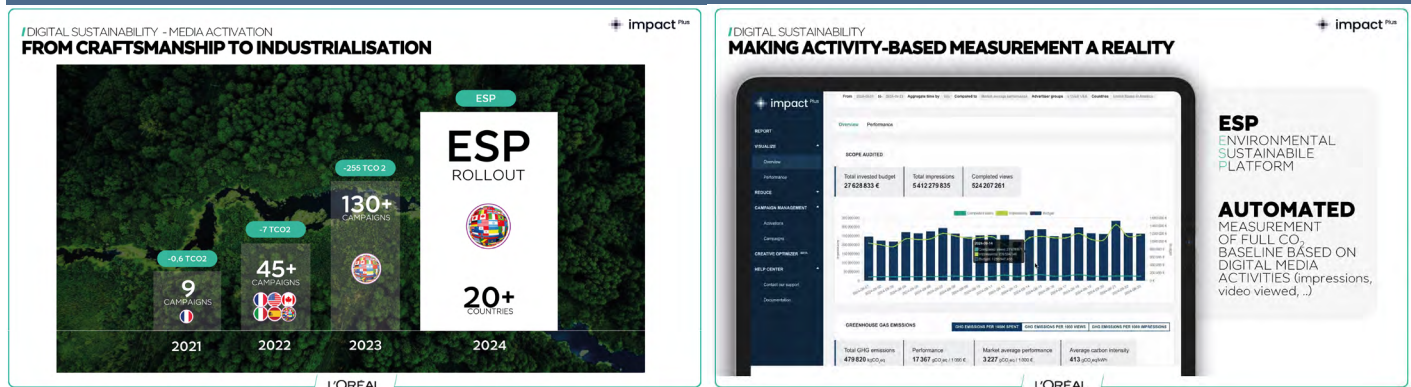
By focusing on creative optimization and device targeting, L'Oréal managed to reduce emissions while ensuring continued engagement with consumers. These actions demonstrated that sustainability and brand effectiveness can coexist in digital marketing.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

L'Oréal's journey highlights the importance of addressing the growing environmental impact of digital media. Key insights include:

- 1. Start small, scale up:** Begin by measuring the emissions of a few campaigns to understand the scale of the problem. This helps in identifying priority areas for improvement.
- 2. Empower teams:** Equip teams and markets with the necessary tools and knowledge to measure emissions, set targets and track progress in reducing their carbon footprint.
- 3. Leverage partnerships:** Collaborating with agencies, startups and industry organizations plays a crucial role in driving systemic change across the entire digital ecosystem.
- 4. Integrate sustainability into media planning:** By prioritizing strategies such as creative optimization and Wi-Fi targeting, brands can reduce emissions without impacting media effectiveness.

L'Oréal's efforts set a benchmark for the digital advertising industry, showing that sustainability can be seamlessly integrated into marketing strategies while driving positive environmental and business outcomes.





# ASAHI

## Transforming Consumption into Biodiversity Action

### CONTEXT

Żubr, Poland's top-selling lager, is owned by Asahi, which integrates sustainability into its strategy, marketing and branding. Asahi's approach identifies and selects sustainability themes that align with a brand's positioning, value chain impact and consumer relevance.

For Żubr — named after the Polish word for the European bison — the framework highlighted biodiversity as a credible and meaningful focus, ensuring the brand's sustainability efforts resonate authentically with its identity and audience.

In a highly commoditised market driven by price promotions, Żubr chose a different path. By aligning its long-running "Guardian of the Forest" narrative with real-world environmental action, the brand aimed to protect nature while preserving its market position.

### ACTION

In 2019, Żubr launched the multi-year campaign "Żubr Saves Endangered Species". Each year, the brand replaced its iconic bison image on cans and bottles with one of Poland's endangered species — such as the lynx, wolf or pygmy owl — and added QR codes directing consumers to online information about how their purchases contributed to environmental action, turning buying a beer into an act of conservation.

At the heart of the campaign is the Żubr Fund, which channels revenue into biodiversity efforts. The Fund has supported land purchases, expanded protected areas and backed scientific research.

Żubr has partnered with WWF Polska and other NGOs, ensuring ecological expertise and third-party oversight. The media strategy focused on packaging and television as these were the most accessible platforms for Żubr's core consumers, while social and digital channels deepened awareness and engagement.





## IMPACT

Żubr's campaign has driven meaningful results across environmental, brand and business indicators:

- **Environmental Protection:** Over four million Polish zlotys (equivalent to \$1 million) donated by the Żubr fund between 2019–2022, supporting the protection of 15 hectares of forest and the creation of 50 biodiversity micro-reserves in eastern Poland.
- **Consumer Mindset Shift:** Żubr drinkers became more likely than the general population to consider changing their lifestyle to protect nature — a marked increase from the baseline, according to Asahi's internal insights and analytics.
- **Sustainable Lifestyle Promotion:** While it doesn't demand a behaviour switch, the campaign increases consumer consciousness and emotional investment in conservation.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The proportion of core consumers citing Żubr as their main beer increased each year from 2019 to 2023, with nearly 15 per cent market share in 2023.
- **Commercial Return:** The campaign helped Żubr generate incremental profit, enabling the brand to retain a price premium while competitors resorted to unsustainable discounting strategies.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Brand authenticity:** The campaign stems directly from Żubr's name, heritage and storytelling tradition, ensuring consumer trust and relevance.
- 2. Do, Then Say:** Real-world conservation efforts through the Żubr Fund created the foundation for evidence-based communication.
- 3. Use Packaging as a Platform for Purpose:** By turning each can and bottle sold into both a message and a mechanism for impact, Żubr reached consumers where it mattered most.
- 4. Collaborate for Credibility:** Partnerships with WWF and other external experts ensured accuracy, transparency and long-term impact.
- 5. Consistency Compounds Impact:** The campaign's multi-year structure allowed equity and environmental value to grow in parallel.

Żubr's multi-year commitment shows that even in mainstream, price-sensitive categories, sustainability-led communications can deliver meaningful environmental action while strengthening brand and business performance.



# COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

## **Collaborate across functions to align on shared sustainability goals and KPIs**

Sustainability is not solely a marketing responsibility — it requires collaboration with product development, operations, finance and HR. CMOs should foster cross-functional alignment to ensure that marketing efforts support broader sustainability objectives.

## **Measure and incentivize agency and supply chain partners on sustainability ambitions**

Agencies, suppliers and partners should be held accountable for their sustainability performance. CMOs should establish clear sustainability criteria for partners, integrate sustainability into contractual agreements and reward those who make meaningful progress.

## **Promote and reward sustainable marketing best practices internally and externally**

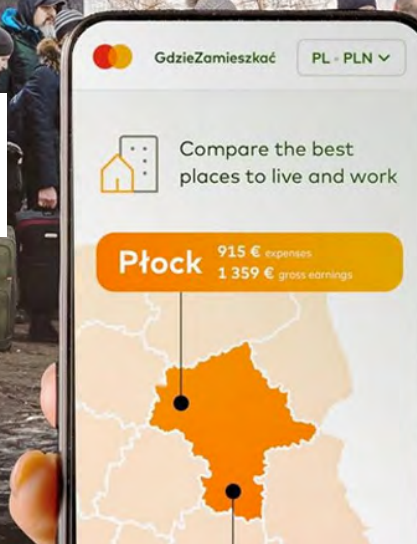
Sharing best practices internally helps embed sustainability into the marketing function, while externally recognizing sustainability leaders in the industry fosters broader adoption. This could include awards programs, industry partnerships and employee recognition initiatives.

## **Collaborate with governments, industry players, civil society and citizens to drive systematic change**

Systemic change requires multi-stakeholder engagement. CMOs should participate in public-private partnerships, contribute to policy discussions, and collaborate with NGOs and advocacy groups to advance sustainability at scale.

# MASTERCARD

## Where to Settle



### CONTEXT

When Russia invaded Ukraine, nearly 10 million refugees crossed into Poland's major cities. For Mastercard, whose brand's purpose centres on inclusive economic growth, the dual challenge was to help millions of displaced people, while relieving pressure on host communities.

### ACTION

Mastercard's analysis showed smaller Polish towns offered lower costs and more available jobs for refugees. Within 5 weeks, the team prototyped Where to Settle, a free digital platform, aggregating anonymized Mastercard data with government statistics, real-time housing and job listings to recommend optimal locations.

An integrated marketing campaign featuring locals personally inviting refugees, humanising smaller communities as welcoming places. By incentivising "data for good" innovation internally and with aligning agency partners, Mastercard ensured every function worked harmoniously.

### IMPACT

Where to Settle delivered significant value across people, planet and profit. In year one, the platform drew 242,000 unique users, with 73,000+ refugees completing the questionnaire to receive relocation guidance and with 92 per cent of users finding the tool helpful.

Analysts estimated the Ukrainian influx could boost Poland's GDP by up to 3.5 per cent, a win-win. For Mastercard, the business impact was equally strong, with brand studies showing double-digit gains in favourability and usage intent. The company's increased reputation for innovative social leadership earned a spot on Fortune's "Change the World" list.

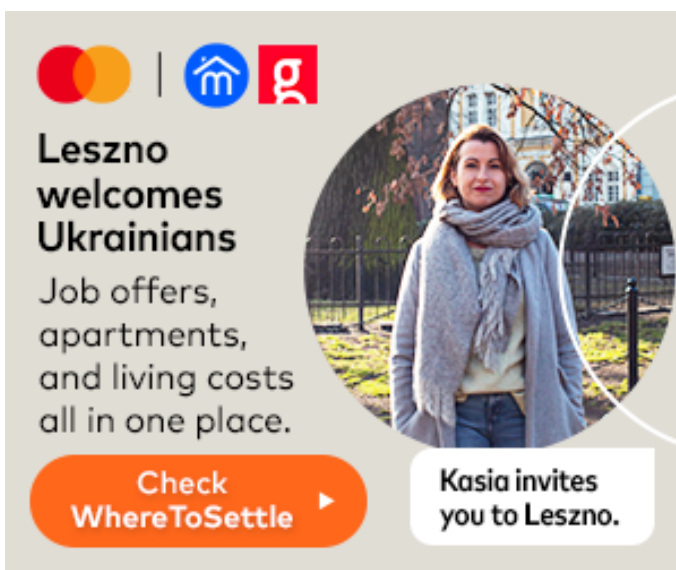
Creatively, the campaign earned top industry recognition, including the Cannes Lions SDG Grand Prix and Titanium Lion — proving purpose-driven marketing drives results.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Embed purpose into strategy:** Mastercard tied the initiative directly to its core purpose of financial inclusion, ensuring full C-suite buy-in.
- 2. Cross-functional collaboration:** Marketers, data scientists, product managers and communications experts united as one agile team, guided by a shared vision.
- 3. Partner across sectors for scale:** By partnering with government agencies and NGOs (to obtain data and endorsements) and industry players (for complementary data and distribution), Mastercard vastly expanded the initiative's reach and credibility.
- 4. Align agencies and suppliers on sustainability KPIs:** All were aligned to privacy, inclusivity and impact benchmarks to ensure the entire marketing supply chain worked toward common good targets.
- 5. Anticipate challenges and adapt:** Mastercard localised the platform in Ukrainian, collaborating with on-the-ground groups to spread awareness. For data privacy, the team anonymised data and retained no personal information. Given the dynamic crisis environment, the tool was continuously updated based on user feedback and evolving needs.

Within Mastercard's broader Room For Everyone initiative, Where to Settle offers a replicable blueprint: collaborate broadly, set bold sustainability targets and leverage your brand's unique assets to solve real problems.



Leszno welcomes Ukrainians

Job offers, apartments, and living costs all in one place.

Check WhereToSettle

Kasia invites you to Leszno.



Legnica welcomes Ukrainians

Check job offers, apartments, and living costs on WhereToSettle

Visit the website

I invite you to Legnica. A city that's easy to live in.

Karolina



Toruń welcomes Ukrainians

Check job offers, apartments, and living costs on WhereToSettle

Visit the website

I invite you to Toruń. A beautiful city worth living in.

Michał



# TATA CONSULTING SERVICES

## Using the Power of Sport and Technology to Advance Sustainability

### CONTEXT

Global spending on sports sponsorship likely exceeded \$123 billion in 2024, giving companies significant influence to align their sponsorship strategies with responsible business practices. This investment represents a powerful lever to advance policy priorities and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a proud participant in the UN Global Compact, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) follows the Tata Group philosophy of building sustainable businesses that are rooted in the community and demonstrate care for the environment. Their focus is on reducing carbon footprint, using renewable energies and adopting a regenerative approach to business — enabled through collaborations with employees, suppliers, customers and communities.

One of the most visible expressions of this commitment is their work in sports sponsorships — specifically, their leadership in making global sports events more sustainable, equitable and transparent.

TCS sponsors 14 major running events across the world, including five of the seven Abbott World Marathon Majors. But for TCS, sponsorship is not just about visibility — it's about responsibility. That's why TCS partnered with the Council for Responsible Sport, a leading nonprofit that certifies sustainable sporting events, to bring rigorous measurement and accountability to this space.

### ACTION

Together, TCS and the Council for Responsible Sport developed ReScore, a digital platform that empowers sports events and organizers to measure and improve performance against the Council's comprehensive standards, spanning five pillars: planning and communications, procurement, resource management, access and equity and community legacy. These standards align closely with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, particularly around environmental stewardship, labor practices and community engagement. ReScore not only empowers organizers to drive greater sustainability and accountability but also demonstrates TCS's strength in delivering innovative digital solutions to address complex global challenges.

TCS's marketing team played a central role in building this framework, collaborating across functions and with external stakeholders — from race directors to NGOs and technology leaders to sustainability experts. Through integrated campaigns and incentives, they've driven the adoption of sustainable practices across their partner events and the wider sports ecosystem, helping to normalize transparency, sustainable innovation and inclusivity in sport.

## IMPACT

Since its launch, ReScore has transformed how sporting events set goals and report progress. For example, the TCS London Marathon became the first major marathon to introduce a carbon levy for international runners. All their medals are made from recycled zinc alloy and they offer a finisher “tree” as the default finisher item at most of their races. London Marathon Events, the marathon's organizing body, achieved the Council's “Evergreen” certification — the highest possible rating — while New York Road Runners became the first running organization certified. Similarly, the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon and the Chicago Marathon have earned Evergreen status, made reductions in energy and waste and improved material circularity.

In just two years, ReScore helped 53 events and organizations earn a certification from the Council after being measured against their rigorous standards. Furthermore, the Council's certification timelines have been reduced by over 50 per cent and 1,718 volunteers were upskilled in new technology through ReScore's development.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Purpose-led sponsorship** can create measurable environmental and social benefits.
- 2. Cross-sector collaboration** is critical to building scalable sustainability tools like ReScore.
- 3. Drive systemic change** by embedding sustainability into brand partnerships and event strategies.
- 4. Technology and accountability tools** can accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices in high-visibility industries.
- 5. Take risks, be disruptive,** create experiences that move people.

This initiative embodies the Tata Group's triple bottom line focus on people, planet and purpose — and demonstrates how responsible marketing and technology can drive meaningful, measurable change. At TCS, sustainability is not a side initiative — it's part of how they show up in the world.





# MEASURING PROGRESS

To drive meaningful change, what gets measured matters. As marketing takes on a more strategic role in advancing sustainability, CMOs need robust systems to track and demonstrate impact. Without clear metrics, it's difficult to assess what's working, where gaps remain or how marketing efforts contribute to broader corporate sustainability goals. Measurement creates accountability, builds credibility with stakeholders and enables data-driven decisions that align marketing strategies with environmental, social and business performance.

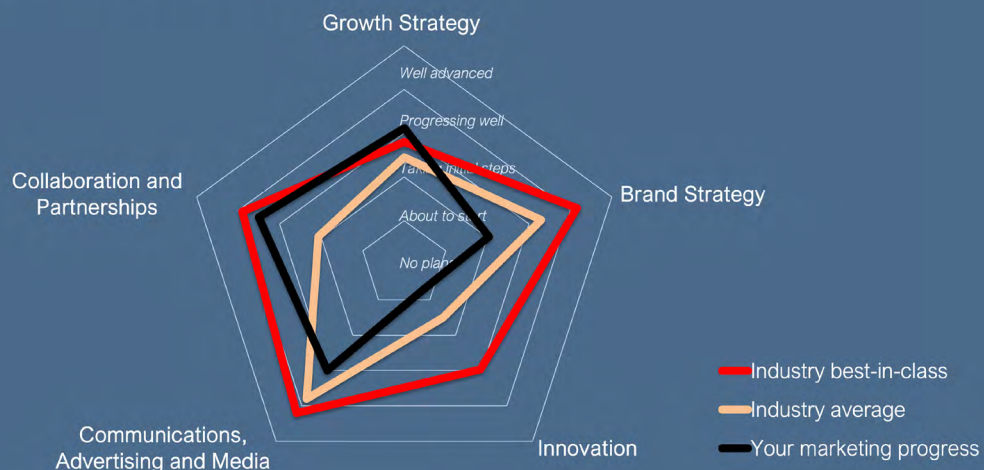
Measuring progress is critical to understanding where the marketing industry stands and where we need to go. Focusing on progress also cultivates a spirit of continuous improvement, acknowledging

that cultivating long-term, tangible impact is an iterative process that requires consistency.

A key component of the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth is a measurement system that can help CMOs identify gaps within their own practices while also benchmarking against peers. This benchmark provides industry-wide insights, revealing barriers, enablers and opportunities across sectors and geographies. It helps identify focus areas for capacity building, enabling you to benchmark your organization's performance against industry averages and best-in-class peers (see Figure 1). By participating, you contribute to shaping a marketing landscape that drives positive impact while gaining actionable insights to refine your strategies.

Figure 1.

## Sustainable Growth Benchmark



Powered by  
**KANTAR**

### Take the Benchmark Survey

The UN Global Compact invites you to participate in the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth Benchmark study powered by Kantar, a vital tool to measure and accelerate the marketing industry's progress toward sustainable growth. This quantitative survey establishes a baseline to track how Chief Marketing Officers and brand leaders are embedding sustainability into strategies, aligning with the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth five pillars: 1) growth strategy, 2) brand strategy, 3) innovation, 4) communication, advertising and media, 5) collaboration and partnerships.

# GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Circular Economy:** a system incorporating practices that optimize resource use and minimize waste across the entire production and consumption cycle. Driven by sustainable product design, a circular economy works to eliminate waste and pollution and keep products and materials in use through processes like recycling and refurbishment. It also aims to regenerate nature, such as through reforestation and water stewardship.

**Claims Framework:** framework that provides a structured approach for organizations to make and communicate credible claims about their sustainability practices, products or services. It outlines the criteria and requirements for making claims, ensuring they are verified, honest and supported by evidence.

**ESG:** an acronym for environmental, social and governance, ESG represents three key non-financial areas used to evaluate a company's performance on the environment and society as well as how robust and transparent its governance is. ESG considers the risks and opportunities of factors such as climate change, resource scarcity, labor practices, diversity and inclusion, corruption and tax transparency. These factors are increasingly important for investors, businesses and policymakers in making informed decisions and promoting responsible business practices.

**Greenwashing:** the act of making false or misleading statements to consumers about the environmental benefits of an organization's operations, products or services. Greenwashing often employs the use of vague terms such as "eco-friendly", "green" or "natural" that are not clearly defined or backed by concrete evidence.

**Net Zero:** refers to an overall balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. Net zero is reached when the amount of emissions added is no more than the amount taken away.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** the practice of communication and collaboration with all parties that have an influence, interest or are impacted by an organization or initiative. Effective stakeholder engagement analyzes, understands and takes into account the interests and needs of each relevant party.

**Sustainability:** the pursuit of environmental preservation, human health, social equity and economic well-being to create thriving, diverse and resilient communities, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The practice of sustainability recognizes that these issues are interconnected, requiring a holistic approach. While sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal, 'sustainable development' refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve this.

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs provide an integrated blueprint where action in one area will positively affect outcomes in others, ensuring that development balances social, economic and environmental needs. The SDGs may also be referred to as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the Global Goals.

**Water Stewardship:** the use of water that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that includes both site- and catchment-based actions.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere thanks to the participants of the first-ever UN Global Compact CMO Think Lab, whose insights and collaboration were instrumental in shaping the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth.



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## **UN GLOBAL COMPACT CMO THINK LAB**

The United Nations Global Compact convened an esteemed group of CMOs to advise on the challenges, opportunities and needs of global marketing leaders as part of the first-ever CMO Think Lab. This group shaped and contributed to the CMO Blueprint for Sustainable Growth, empowering CMOs with the knowledge, case studies, and resources needed to drive sustainable growth and positive impact.

The CMO Think Lab was by invitation only. It offered a small group of leading organizations a collaborative space to actively contribute to the development of thought leadership content through interactive workshops, consultations, calls, webinars and other activities. Learn more: <https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/think-labs/chief-marketing-officer>

## **DISCLAIMER**

The inclusion of company names and/or case studies in this publication is intended strictly for learning purposes and does not constitute an endorsement of the individual companies by the UN Global Compact. While reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the information is correct, the UN Global Compact does not accept any liability for any errors or omissions.

## THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT



### HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



### LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



### ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



### ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

## ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

The ambition of the **UN Global Compact** is to accelerate and scale the global collective impact of business by upholding the Ten Principles and delivering the SDGs through accountable companies and ecosystems that enable change. With more than 20,000 participating companies, 5 Regional Hubs, 63 Country Networks covering 80 countries and 13 Country Managers establishing Networks in 18 other countries, the UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative — one Global Compact uniting business for a better world.

For more information, follow [@globalcompact](#) on social media and visit our website at [unglobalcompact.org](#).



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