

HOW TO SELL THE SUSTAINABILITY VALUE PROPOSITION INTERNALLY





INTRODUCTION

How sustainability software can safeguard the future of business. Growing numbers of customers, investors and employees are recognizing that sustainability is a crucially important part of the future of doing business^{1, 2, 3}.

Companies have many reasons to improve the sustainability of their operations and, with modern tools, they have the power to make that ambition a reality.

By using a sustainability software application, companies can improve the collection of sustainability data and metrics across their operations, aggregate that data efficiently, and share conclusions on a global scale⁴. Although influencing customers, investors, employees, and business owners alike may seem logical, taking the step to adopt sustainability tools and software within your company can be challenging.

Internal decision-makers may not see the value in these tools, may perceive sustainable goals as unattainable or unimportant, or may see these strategies as unrelated to their specific goals within the organization.

However, the value proposition of sustainability tools affects the organization at all levels, and across all departments. Every individual step of the journey towards adoption has value. Building a positive strategy and providing transparency is the key to effectively getting internal stakeholders on board.

THE CHALLENGE

Sustainability issues can feel distant to colleagues whose work is primarily concerned with a company's internal affairs.

Although the term "sustainability" has become mainstream, some may feel that it is not part of their responsibility as software specialists, team leaders, finance, or operations personnel to get involved with these initiatives. Effectively communicating that sustainability is the key to business continuity, regardless of their role, is key.

The pitch for sustainability tools may seem intimidating. Implementing data collection, data analysis, and transparent communication of that data across a whole business or supply chain is an ambitious goal, one that internal stakeholders may perceive as a massive drain on time and resources, both of which may already be scarce.

To ease these concerns, companies need to convey a clear message that there are tools available, tailored to make these goals achievable.



DEMONSTRATE THE BENEFITS

The benefits of integrating sustainability tools are multi-faceted for any business. Exciting internal stakeholders about these benefits is the best way to get them on board with implementation.

Much of the value generated by using sustainability software is related to creating transparency throughout your supply chain and around your efforts towards sustainability, and appealing to consumers more effectively as a result. Sustainability tools can also significantly help to ensure business continuity and increase the efficiency of your operations.

- ✓ **One benefit of adopting sustainability tools is that it sends a clear message of your commitment to sustainability.**

Sustainability in production and transparency around your processes are major concerns for consumers and investors. 85% of Millennials, 80% of Gen Z-ers, and 79% of Gen X-ers believe that it is “extremely” or “very” important that companies implement programs to improve the environment⁵.

These groups represent a massive proportion of many consumer bases, particularly in the textile industry. A company targeting these demographics needs to clearly demonstrate their commitment to the environment. Investors are also increasingly concerned with these issues - investment that takes into account environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues now represents one in every four dollars invested in the US⁶.

- ✓ **Demonstrating an authentic commitment to the values of sustainability is key.**

Ethical intentions that are not supported by impactful evidence will lead to consumer dissatisfaction. Greenwashing practices, marketing practices that co-opt the language of sustainability without promising real action, are increasingly unlikely to convince sustainably-minded consumers that a brand is aligned with their environmental values⁷.

- ✓ **Sustainability tools give a company the data they need to accurately and effectively communicate their sustainability achievements clearly and quantifiably to consumers and other stakeholders.**

Using reporting functions to verify a company's performance against key recognized indicators and metrics, these tools give a straightforward and concrete way of demonstrating that they are on track in transitioning into sustainable operations.



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Sustainability is about more than just brand perception. Many businesses face unique new risks as a result of climate change.

Shifts in normal weather patterns, rising temperatures, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events pose serious threats to the supply chains of many materials and products. Simultaneously, regulators keen to minimize the extent of climate change are updating their requirements for production practices regularly. To ensure business continuity, companies must anticipate risks and mitigate them, evolving with the changing landscape. Data collection and aggregation functions provided by sustainability tools like [CleanChain](#), an ADEC Innovation, facilitate improved analysis of these potential risks. This data and the conclusions drawn from it can be used to improve efficiencies and allocate workloads more effectively, empowering organizations to be more effective and more adaptable.

Business continuity can also be disrupted by the changing climate in more subtle ways. Eco-anxiety is a growing source of stress for employees across many industries⁸. Employees that work in an environment where they feel that the urgency of the climate crisis is not taken seriously are likely to become dissatisfied and frustrated with their jobs. A company that proudly and decisively commits to integrating sustainability tools into its operations provides reassurance that employees are contributing to working towards a more sustainable world, which can improve job satisfaction and productivity⁹.



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1. Building Engagement

Generating excitement and interest around the potential benefits of adopting sustainability tools should be the cornerstone of your strategy to pitch the value proposition of these tools. With this foundation in place, there are a variety of next steps you can take to effectively “sell” the idea within your company and bring key internal stakeholders on board.

2. Develop a Deliberate Process and Timeline

Many key stakeholders will have concerns about the scale of change required to integrate sustainability tools into their existing processes. To answer these concerns, emphasize that adopting sustainability tools and taking advantage of the opportunities they offer is a journey. Each individual step will provide value in itself, a reputational benefit, or an operational improvement that rewards commitment to finding a more sustainable way of doing things.

3. Recruit the Advocates

Reach out to the biggest advocates of sustainability in the company. Passion and concern about environmental issues cut across departmental lines. Focusing on these values can be a powerful way to start building cross-team support.

4. Start at the Top

When CEOs, CFOs, and COOs positively engage in a project, it can become part of a company’s identity. Getting C-suite engagement as early as possible, and at as high a level as possible, will encourage other employees to follow their lead, and see the adoption of sustainability tools as the next step in a company’s progression.

5. Engage the Innovators

The development of sustainability tools has been an area of significant innovation in recent years. Staff members who are interested in the future of business and technology are primed to get excited about implementing new tools. These team members may also be well-placed to explain the improved efficiencies that sustainability tools could bring to others.

6. Demonstrate the Alternative

Ignoring sustainability issues is a risk to business continuity. Environmental changes threaten the availability of raw materials, the integrity of transport chains, and the safety of employees. Companies need to research specific impacts on supply chains, products and revenue that they may encounter, and use specific case studies to highlight potential repercussions of a failure to act.

7. Highlight Successes

Companies in every industry are giving consideration to sustainability¹⁰. Benchmarking competitors’ and collaborators’ activities will give tangible examples of companies that have seen a positive impact as a result of adopting sustainability tools. These examples can be used as compelling evidence to support the case of adopting sustainable tools.

FACING THE FUTURE

Using sustainability tools to collect, aggregate, and present data on sustainability metrics is a powerful way to appeal to sustainable-minded consumers, advance a company's reputation with investors, and reduce harmful impacts on the environment and communities, while also future-proofing your business.

By focusing on a message of opportunity and highlighting the different kinds of benefits sustainability tools can generate, you can overcome resistance to change and set trajectory to a sustainable and profitable future.



ADEC Innovations ESG Solutions advances sustainable practices around the world, and helps organizations responsibly grow and operate.

CleanChain, an ADEC Innovation, is an award-winning chemical management system that aligns with your current processes and streamlines the process of tracking, managing, and reporting compliance with Manufacturing Restricted Substance Lists (MRSLs) and controls limits.

Contact us to find out more.
cleanchain.com

CleanChain can help you:

- ▶ Improve and ensure MRSL and RSL compliance
- ▶ Reduce costs and burden of aggregating supply chain data
- ▶ Understand and reduce risks across your supply base
- ▶ Implement and track corrective and preventive actions across your supply chain
- ▶ Make more informed procurement decisions
- ▶ Demonstrate progress against your sustainability goals

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