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DO GOOD.

A Climate Week 2023
Imperative for Brands
Navigating Purpose and Sustainability

THE TAKEAWAY

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(You can read the full article [here.](#))

Over the past week, I've had many robust conversations with brand leaders about the interplay between purpose and sustainability at Climate Week events. With the spotlight increasingly on our planet's most pressing issues—rising temperatures, dwindling resources and the growing threat of climate change—the demand for action from the business sector alongside governments reverberates across the global stage.

Excitingly, the majority of brand leaders I've met over the past few days are seeking ways to integrate doing good into all aspects of their work. They recognize purpose and sustainability (the broader definition of which includes environmental and social initiatives) should no longer be viewed as costs to the business, but rather as investments into brand development, growth and value creation.


For the most successful purpose-driven brands, sustainability isn't a fleeting aspiration or a temporary campaign during Climate Week—a sustainability mindset is engrained in the foundation upon which they build their identity. They appreciate that sustainability isn't a distant goal; it's an immediate imperative. An increasingly urgent call that insists on commitment and accountability, and it's in this crucible that purpose emerges as a vehicle to close the say-do gap and integrate sustainability into daily activities and operations.

Walking the Purpose-Driven Path

The world needs brands that not only talk the talk but walk the walk—a purposeful approach to business that goes beyond surface-level activities and integrates purpose and sustainability into the very DNA of the brand's culture. As brand leaders continue to grapple with the best ways to activate and integrate purpose into the very essence of their organizations, Climate Week 2023 stands as an urgent call to action. Over the past week, I heard people speaking about the need for change at a greater scale and faster pace. About actions rather than aspirations and commitments.

There is no doubt that purpose and sustainability are no longer ideals reserved for glossy reports and fleeting campaigns. They are the driving forces that must underpin every decision, every initiative and every interaction within and beyond the corporate world. The urgency of our global challenges demands nothing less. Brands that understand this profound truth are doing more than responding to the times; they are seeking to use their influence to shape them. They are proving that purpose and a sustainability mindset are investments, not costs; strategies, not slogans; and a way of operating, not afterthoughts.

As we depart from Climate Week 2023, let's carry with us the conviction that purpose-driven brands are more than a force for good. That purpose-driven brands are a catalyst for lasting change. They show us that there is no gap between saying and doing. Together, we can navigate the path toward a sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for all.



Here are 7 guidelines for brand leaders to navigate the interplay between purpose and sustainability:

- 1. Distinguish purpose from sustainability:** While purpose and sustainability are closely related, they are distinct concepts. Sustainability is about responsible resource management, while purpose is the deeper reason your business exists that embraces a wider human truth.
- 2. Tether purpose to your business:** To make it both meaningful and effective, embed your purpose into the core idea for your brand, ensuring it's tethered to your value proposition and your business strategy.

3. **Emotional connection matters:** Genuine care for employees, customers, and communities creates deeper emotional connections. Purpose-driven brands foster more meaningful emotional bonds, often through sustainability efforts.
4. **Assimilate Sustainable Practices:** Sustainability is about more than doing good; it's about safeguarding the resources your business needs for the long term. Integrate sustainable practices into your daily operations and cultivate a sustainability mindset within your culture.
5. **Efficaciously promoting sustainability can inspire trust and loyalty:** Purpose-driven initiatives that promote sustainability can foster trust and inspire collective action. Authenticity and meaningful connections lead to customer loyalty and growth.
6. **360° filters:** Consider purpose and sustainability as filters that unite all aspects of your business, from operations to marketing to HR to finance. When integrated into your DNA, they guide every decision employees make and are investments into brand development, growth and value creation.
7. **Catalyze change through the interplay of purpose and sustainability:** Position your brand as a catalyst for change by integrating sustainability goals upfront with your purpose. Purpose-driven brands have the power to create meaningful and lasting change – through influencing the way people think and behave.

To learn more about the interplay between purpose and sustainability, arrange a training session or get support integrating purpose, sustainability and ESG into brand development and organizational culture, please reach out.