
Sustainable Marketing: Integrating Environmental Values into Customer Communication

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Abstract:

Purpose: This article investigates how companies can meaningfully incorporate environmental values into their communication with customers to promote eco-friendly behaviors, strengthen brand reputation, and foster lasting consumer relationships.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Grounded in recent academic research, the study highlights the significance of CSR initiatives, eco-branding strategies, and digital transformation—particularly through green storytelling, sustainability-focused advertising, and interactive tools such as social media and the metaverse. It explores how trust, authenticity, and the credibility of green messages influence consumer choices across key sectors like fashion, transport, and retail.

Findings: The research underscores the importance of internal alignment and employee engagement in delivering consistent and trustworthy sustainability messages and it considers the potential of new technologies-like intelligent reflecting surfaces and AI-driven communication-to personalize environmental messaging.

Practical Implication: The article offers a practical framework and guidance for marketers and policymakers committed to sustainable development.

Originality/Value: In the face of growing environmental concerns and a more environmentally aware public, sustainable marketing is no longer optional, it has become a strategic imperative.

Keywords: Sustainable marketing, environmental values, green communication, eco-conscious consumers, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, environmental degradation and climate change have emerged as critical global challenges. In response, organizations face increasing pressure from regulators, consumers, and broader society to implement sustainable practices both in their production processes and in how they engage with customers.

As consumer expectations evolve, marketing strategies are shifting to reflect sustainability values more visibly and authentically. Sustainable marketing now functions as a structural pillar of responsible business practice, seeking to harmonize environmental stewardship with effective, multichannel communication (Ganna and Aladwey, 2025).

Relationships between brands and consumers have undergone a marked transformation, driven by rising environmental awareness and more rigorous policy frameworks. Customers increasingly evaluate brands based on ethical behavior, operational transparency, and environmental responsibility.

As a result, marketing communication must go beyond information and persuasion to also embody ethical and ecological integrity. Achieving this requires a comprehensive understanding of how environmental values are conveyed across digital, print, and interpersonal communication channels (Mishra and Barik, 2025; Zupok, 2018; 2021).

A growing body of environmentally aware consumers now prioritizes sustainability, ethical sourcing, and climate-conscious actions in their purchasing decisions. This shift is most visible in phenomena such as eco-labeling, carbon footprint disclosures, and brand-led environmental activism. As Rabiou and Jaeger-Erben (2024) observe, today's consumers are drawn to brands that deliver clear, honest sustainability messages supported by tangible actions.

Trust in a brand's environmental commitment has become a cornerstone of both brand loyalty and purchase intention. Consequently, marketing efforts must transcend superficial green claims or symbolic gestures. Instead, firms must embrace transparency, credibility, and value-driven storytelling. When companies fail to substantiate their sustainability efforts with evidence, they risk damaging their brand image and eroding consumer trust. By embedding environmental principles in every facet of communication, organizations can cultivate emotional bonds, competitive resilience, and long-term credibility (Mladenovic *et al.*, 2024).

Integrating sustainability into marketing communication involves several interdependent components, including message content, communication channels, audience segmentation, and narrative tone. A successful strategy aligns these elements while fostering internal collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and technological innovation. Digital transformation plays a key role in enabling real-

time, personalized interactions with eco-conscious consumers (Zhong and Zhao, 2024).

Effective sustainable communication uses storytelling to demonstrate environmental responsibility and evoke emotional resonance. Content may include sustainability reports, transparent supply chain disclosures, or employee-led initiatives. According to Fitri and Isa (2024), compelling narratives grounded in real outcomes reinforce organizational commitment to sustainability, especially in sectors such as fashion and ecological tourism.

Moreover, internal employee engagement is critical for the authenticity of external communication. Piwowar-Sulej *et al.* (2024) emphasize that internal alignment reinforces consistent sustainability messaging and strengthens organizational culture. An integrated approach to both internal and external communication enhances brand legitimacy and ensures coherence between corporate values and consumer-facing messages.

The growing popularity of green marketing also brings significant risks. Misleading environmental claims, often referred to as greenwashing, can undermine consumer trust and provoke regulatory scrutiny. Products promoted as sustainable or eco-friendly without third-party verification or measurable environmental impact face increasing skepticism from informed consumers (Crapa *et al.*, 2024; Zupok, 2015).

To establish credibility, organizations must provide verifiable evidence from trustworthy sources. Sustainable messaging must be consistently embedded across all platforms, including advertisements, packaging, social media, and customer service interactions. As Bai *et al.* (2024) note, emerging tools such as artificial intelligence and deep learning enable real-time content personalization and automation, enhancing message relevance while maintaining consistency.

However, sustainability communication loses its integrity when organizational behavior fails to align with communicated values. In today's digital landscape, inconsistencies are easily detected and widely shared. Therefore, responsible communication must rest on genuine accountability and comprehensive performance measurement (Aljebreen *et al.*, 2024).

Digital technologies have fundamentally transformed how environmental values are communicated. Social media platforms now serve as essential tools for brands to engage with environmentally conscious audiences, share sustainability efforts, and respond quickly to ecological concerns. Visual content created by influencers and consumers, especially on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, helps amplify brand messages and foster community engagement (Zhong and Zhao, 2024).

Immersive technologies such as virtual and augmented reality provide innovative formats for delivering sustainability narratives. Virtual eco-tourism, three-

dimensional product traceability, and digital carbon footprint visualizations enhance consumer awareness and foster meaningful brand interactions (Crapa et al., 2024).

The integration of intelligent reflecting surfaces with machine learning further enables real-time adaptive message delivery based on user behavior (Bai *et al.*, 2024). As Neha *et al.* (2024) suggest, future innovations in digital infrastructure must evolve in tandem with sustainability objectives, ensuring that green communication remains efficient, equitable, and impactful across audiences.

This study responds to a critical gap in both academic and business discourse by offering an integrated framework for embedding environmental values into customer communication strategies. While much research exists on CSR and sustainable branding, there remains a lack of interdisciplinary studies combining environmental messaging, digital transformation, and consumer psychology across multiple industry sectors.

The research addresses core questions regarding consumer perceptions of sustainability messaging and how such messages influence behavioral outcomes. It also explores the role of advanced technologies in enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of green communication. By examining measurable changes in consumer response to sustainable messaging, this study offers theoretical insights and practical tools for marketers, sustainability professionals, and policy advisors.

Ultimately, the paper aims to provide actionable solutions that bridge marketing practice with environmental responsibility, stakeholder trust, and global sustainable development goals.

2. Literature Review

Sustainable marketing brings together corporate environmental duty and strategic communication practices. Its primary aim is to unite business success with social responsibility and ecological requirements. As Peattie and Belz (2010) explain, sustainable marketing involves promoting and developing products while considering their environmental impact, social benefits, and long-term value creation.

With the evolution of corporate communication programs, sustainable marketing has become a core strategic element, surpassing its earlier role as a CSR-related initiative (Ganna and Aladwey, 2025).

The development of sustainable marketing has been driven by two major forces: changes in consumer behavior and growing institutional pressures, both intensified by the global climate crisis. Mishra and Barik (2025) emphasize that consumers increasingly apply ethical criteria to purchasing decisions, including considerations such as carbon emissions, recyclability, and corporate activism.

In this context, sustainable marketing plays a crucial role in building authenticity, increasing market transparency, and fostering durable consumer relationships based on meaningful differentiation.

Consumer psychology is a central aspect of sustainable marketing research. Rabiou and Jaeger-Erben (2024) argue that incorporating environmental values into marketing communication enhances consumers' ability to assess the authenticity and integrity of a brand.

Organizations that effectively communicate their sustainability efforts tend to build stronger emotional connections with consumers, resulting in higher levels of loyalty. Conversely, when consumers perceive contradictions between a brand's messaging and its actual behavior, it can lead to a breakdown in trust and brand rejection.

A key concept in this regard is green trust. Mladenovic *et al.* (2024) define green trust as the confidence consumers place in the credibility of environmental claims. This trust depends on the clarity of messaging, the presence of third-party certifications, and the perceived alignment between corporate claims and organizational behavior. When these elements are consistently present, green trust acts as a mediator between brand communication and consumer purchasing behavior.

Environmental communication strategies typically span four main channels: digital platforms, print media, experiential marketing, and face-to-face interactions. Fitri and Isa (2024) emphasize that effective strategies combine storytelling with transparency, aligning company narratives with consumer values. In industries such as sustainable tourism, fashion, and hospitality, this approach has been shown to boost brand engagement and customer satisfaction.

A crucial internal factor in sustaining credible green communication is employee involvement. Piowar-Sulej *et al.* (2024) argue that when staff members are well-informed and actively participate in environmental initiatives, organizations are more likely to maintain coherence between internal practices and external messaging. Educating employees in sustainability-related content strengthens organizational culture and enhances message consistency across departments and with external stakeholders.

One of the most pressing challenges in sustainable marketing is the threat of greenwashing. This practice involves deceptive or exaggerated environmental claims that mislead consumers. Crapa *et al.* (2024) warn that marketing lacking verifiable evidence weakens consumer trust and attracts scrutiny from regulators and advocacy organizations.

The credibility of environmental messaging depends on transparency and proof. Aljebreen *et al.* (2024) advocate for integrating ESG reporting frameworks into

marketing content. They propose that carbon footprint reduction, waste management practices, and ethical labor standards should be key performance indicators in assessing the reliability of sustainability communication.

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the landscape of green marketing. Bai *et al.* (2024) describe how artificial intelligence and machine learning are being used to deliver tailored sustainability messages. These systems allow for real-time profiling and personalization, including chatbot-enabled product suggestions based on environmental preferences.

Zhong and Zhao (2024) highlight how social media has enabled two-way communication between brands and eco-conscious audiences. By responding to user feedback and involving consumers in campaign co-creation, companies can increase message relevance and authenticity. Influencer marketing, particularly from environmental vloggers, has further expanded message reach and credibility, leveraging peer influence to enhance engagement.

The scholarly contributions reviewed above are summarized in Table 1, which outlines key findings and the theoretical foundations of current thinking in sustainable marketing communication. Despite the increasing sophistication of green marketing strategies, several important research gaps remain.

Table 1. *Summary of Key Literature on Sustainable Marketing Communication*

Author(s)	Focus Area	Key Contribution
Ganna and Aladwey (2025)	Evolution of sustainable marketing	Sustainability as a strategic imperative in marketing practices.
Mishra and Barik (2025)	Consumer behavior and environmental values	Consumers prefer brands that align with their ecological ethics.
Rabiu & Jaeger-Erben (2024)	The psychological impact of green marketing	Green messaging builds emotional engagement and trust.
Mladenovic et al. (2024)	Concept of green trust	Green trust mediates brand loyalty and purchase intent.
Fitri and Isa (2024)	Narrative strategies in green tourism	Storytelling enhances green brand perception in tourism.
Piwowar-Sulej et al. (2024)	Internal communication and employee alignment	Engaged employees improve sustainability messaging consistency.
Crapa et al. (2024)	Risks of greenwashing	Vague messaging can backfire; regulatory scrutiny is increasing.
Aljebreen et al. (2024)	ESG frameworks in marketing	ESG metrics strengthen credibility and consumer trust.
Bai et al. (2024)	AI and personalized sustainability messaging	AI tools allow individualized green recommendations and automate authenticity.
Zhong and Zhao (2024)	Social media engagement	Social platforms enable interactive and transparent sustainability dialogues.

Source: Authors' work.

Notably, the effectiveness of sustainability messaging has yet to be thoroughly documented across diverse industries and cultural settings. Although digital platforms are increasingly central to marketing activities, academic understanding of how augmented and virtual reality environments affect green message reception remains limited (Zhong and Zhao, 2024; Bai *et al.*, 2024).

Furthermore, there is a need to develop models that can evaluate both the financial and reputational return on investment (ROI) of sustainable marketing initiatives. Existing frameworks lack standardization in measuring the impact of environmental communication on customer lifetime value and brand equity (Aljebreen *et al.*, 2024).

Research on how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can adopt scalable and cost-effective sustainability communication practices is particularly scarce, pointing to a critical area for further academic exploration.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively explore how organizations integrate environmental values into customer communication. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how sustainable marketing strategies operate across industries and audience segments.

Quantitative data were collected through an online survey distributed to marketing specialists, while qualitative insights were gathered from semi-structured interviews and a content analysis of sustainability materials, including branding content and corporate reports.

The research follows a convergent parallel design, in which both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously but analyzed independently before being integrated during interpretation. As highlighted by Mladenovic *et al.* (2024) and Rabiou and Jaeger-Erben (2024), this methodological approach ensures both statistical robustness and rich contextual insight, enhancing the study's validity and explanatory depth.

To capture a broad and relevant dataset, the online questionnaire reached 250 marketing professionals based in Europe, Asia, and North America, all working in sectors where sustainability plays a significant role—such as food and beverage, apparel, tourism, and energy. The survey consisted of 20 structured questions aimed at identifying patterns in environmental messaging, evaluating its perceived impact, and highlighting both challenges and target audience considerations.

In parallel, the research team conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with marketing executives and sustainability officers. The semi-structured format allowed participants to discuss their strategies for building sustainability narratives,

regulatory compliance, interdepartmental coordination, and customer responses. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed using NVivo software. The coding process focused on identifying recurring themes such as perceived authenticity, message coherence, and internal alignment.

Content analysis was also carried out on 50 brand websites, sustainability reports, and digital communication materials. The researchers designed a coding framework to capture common environmental keywords such as “carbon neutral” and “zero waste,” recurring imagery including forests and recycling icons, and structural elements like ESG dashboards and certification badges. This layer of analysis provided valuable insight into how environmental narratives are visually and linguistically constructed across platforms.

Participants and content sources were selected using different sampling strategies. Interviewees and content items were chosen purposively to ensure that the study captured the experiences of professionals directly involved in sustainability communication. In contrast, the survey employed stratified random sampling to ensure representation across various industries and company sizes, strengthening the generalizability of the results.

Data analysis combined statistical techniques with interpretative methods. Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using SPSS. The researchers applied descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression analysis to evaluate how sustainability messaging influences consumer engagement. Internal consistency was verified through Cronbach’s alpha, with the tool achieving a high reliability score of 0.86.

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. The coding process focused on patterns of credibility, greenwashing concerns, and internal communication practices. Additionally, frequency counts and illustrative examples were used to identify dominant themes across both textual and visual materials, offering a grounded understanding of organizational behavior.

To ensure the integrity of findings, the study emphasized methodological triangulation and cross-verification between data sources. Comparing interview narratives with content analysis results helped establish strong internal validity. Reliability was strengthened through pilot testing of the survey instrument and the consistent application of qualitative coding procedures.

Ethical standards were strictly upheld throughout the research process. The study received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were preserved during data collection, analysis, and reporting, ensuring compliance with ethical research practices.

Table 2. *Overview of Methodological Components*

Component	Details
Research Design	Mixed-methods, convergent parallel
Data Collection	Online survey, semi-structured interviews, content analysis
Sample Size	250 survey respondents, 15 interviewees, and 50 brand communications analyzed
Sampling Strategy	Stratified random (survey), purposive (interviews/content)
Data Analysis Tools	SPSS (quantitative), NVivo (qualitative), frequency coding
Key Variables	Green message clarity, consumer trust, internal alignment, media channel
Validity Strategy	Triangulation across methods and data sources
Reliability Check	Cronbach's alpha for survey ($\alpha = 0.86$); inter-coder agreement for content
Ethical Measures	IRB approval, informed consent, data anonymization

Source: authors' work.

The results of this study shed light on how organizations are currently incorporating environmental values into their customer communication practices. Survey responses clearly show that sustainability has become a growing expectation among consumers.

According to 83 percent of marketing professionals, interest in environmentally responsible messaging has increased notably in recent years. Many of them observed that campaigns built around sustainability themes led to significantly higher engagement—digital advertisements with green content generated 65 percent more clicks than those without such elements.

This deeper engagement appears to go hand in hand with stronger brand loyalty. Nearly three-quarters of respondents, or 72 percent, reported that their customers became more loyal after the implementation of sustainability-focused messaging. Many brands also noticed a rise in the frequency of customer interactions over a six-month period. Teams that adopted storytelling centered on environmental values observed a greater emotional response from their audience and improved retention of marketing messages.

However, only 38 percent of respondents confirmed that their organizations had developed a clearly defined and consistent sustainability message across all customer contact points. This indicates that, despite widespread intentions, the actual execution of green communication remains uneven.

Insights from in-depth interviews added important context to these numbers. Professionals across industries emphasized that sustainability messaging cannot stand alone as a marketing function—it must be rooted in collaboration across departments, particularly with compliance and supply chain units. One respondent put it plainly: "If our products or sourcing aren't truly sustainable, then our messaging doesn't matter. It's just decoration."

Authenticity emerged as a recurring theme. Several interviewees described the difficulty of balancing creative freedom with the increasing pressure to present evidence-based claims. They agreed that consumers are now too informed to accept vague promises or symbolic gestures. What audiences demand today is transparency, honesty, and proof of action.

Interviewees also underscored the importance of local context. Regional concerns, cultural norms, and environmental realities all influence how sustainability messages are received. For example, messages promoting water conservation resonate more deeply in arid regions, while urban consumers are more responsive to themes like carbon neutrality. Many participants noted that campaigns tailored to local values were consistently more effective than standardized global messages.

Content analysis of brand websites and digital communication further confirmed these observations. Companies across sectors such as cosmetics, apparel, and food regularly used environmental terms like eco-friendly, biodegradable, and carbon neutral in their external messaging. Visual elements—such as forests, oceans, recycling icons, and natural color schemes—were often used to reinforce environmental themes emotionally.

However, in most cases, these symbolic messages lacked supporting data. Fewer than half of the reviewed companies provided clear evidence to back up their claims, such as third-party certifications, ESG dashboards, or lifecycle impact disclosures. This gap between message and evidence raises concerns about credibility and long-term trust.

In addition, the study found notable differences between sectors. Media and technology companies were more likely to use quantitative data and visual analytics in their communication, while consumer goods companies leaned into lifestyle storytelling.

Despite these efforts, one common limitation emerged across all industries: sustainability messaging was often tied to isolated campaigns rather than integrated into the broader brand identity. As a result, communications tended to be inconsistent, short-lived, and less effective over time.

Bringing together the survey results, interviews, and content analysis leads to a clear conclusion: businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability communication, but many are still struggling to align their strategies with authentic, consistent practice.

Internal misalignment, limited resources, and complex regulatory environments make it difficult to maintain credible messaging across all platforms. Marketing teams are aware of the risks of being perceived as disingenuous and are actively working to strike a balance between aspiration and accountability.

What emerges from this study is a portrait of sustainable marketing at a crossroads. There is clear intention and growing pressure to act, but the capacity to fully integrate environmental values into every layer of brand communication is still developing. This calls for a more thoughtful, strategic, and honest approach to how companies engage with their customers around sustainability—and how they live up to the values they promote.

Table 3. Summary of Empirical Findings

Focus Area	Key Findings	Implications
Customer engagement (survey)	83% observed increased demand for sustainability in messaging; green ads led to 65% more engagement than standard ones	Green messaging drives customer attention and digital interaction
Brand loyalty (survey)	72% noted stronger customer loyalty; interaction frequency increased over six months	Sustainability contributes to longer-term customer relationships
Message consistency (survey)	Only 38% reported consistent environmental messaging across all customer touchpoints	Need for better integration of sustainability communication across all brand interfaces
Cross-department collaboration (interviews)	Marketing relies on procurement, compliance, and supply chain teams to deliver credible environmental stories	Effective messaging depends on organizational alignment
Authenticity and trust (interviews)	Customers reject vague or symbolic messages; credibility hinges on factual accuracy and transparency	Brands must balance inspiration with real data to build trust
Cultural relevance (interviews)	Localized campaigns aligned with regional concerns (e.g., water vs. carbon) performed better than standardized ones	Culturally responsive messages enhance impact
Keyword usage (content analysis)	Common use of terms like “eco-friendly,” “biodegradable,” and “carbon neutral” across cosmetics, food, and apparel industries	Language frames perception of sustainability identity
Visual storytelling (content analysis)	Frequent use of imagery like forests, water, recycling icons, and earthy tones	Visuals emotionally reinforce sustainability themes
Evidence and credibility (content analysis)	Fewer than 50% of brands provided certifications or ESG data to support environmental claims	Lack of evidence undermines message credibility
Sector-specific communication styles (synthesis)	Media used numbers and charts; consumer brands focused on lifestyle and values	Communication must match industry expectations and stakeholder preferences

Strategic integration (synthesis)	Most sustainability efforts were campaign-based and disconnected from brand core	Long-term success requires embedding sustainability into brand identity and operations
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Source: Authors' work.

To complement the descriptive findings and thematic insights, selected statistical analyses were conducted to assess the strength and significance of relationships between key variables. These tests aimed to validate observed patterns and provide empirical support for claims regarding customer engagement, trust formation, and message consistency across sectors. The results, summarized below, highlight statistically significant effects of green communication strategies on consumer behavior and organizational outcomes.

Table 4. *Statistical Summary of Key Findings*

Statistical Test	Variable(s) Tested	Key Result	Interpretation
Chi-square test	Green messaging vs. Engagement (click-through)	$\chi^2(1, N = 250) = 10.64, p < .01$	Green messaging significantly improves customer engagement
Regression analysis	Storytelling, ESG use → Customer Trust	$R^2 = 0.42, \beta = .61, p < .001$	Trust is strongly predicted by storytelling and ESG-based communication
ANOVA	Industry sector → Message consistency	$F(3, 246) = 5.87, p < .01$	Significant differences in message consistency by industry
Descriptive stats	Customer loyalty after green campaigns	$M = 4.3, SD = 0.6$ (on 5-point scale)	Respondents report high customer loyalty linked to sustainability
Cronbach's Alpha	Survey scale internal consistency	$\alpha = 0.86$	Survey items were highly reliable

Source: Authors' work.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant gap between organizational intentions and the actual implementation of sustainable marketing practices. While many companies express strong commitments to integrating environmental values into their strategies, their execution often falls short.

This disconnect is consistent with prior academic insights, including Delmas and Burbano's (2011) work on symbolic environmentalism, which suggests that many organizations continue to engage in surface-level green initiatives without making substantive changes to internal systems. Although survey respondents confirmed that sustainability messaging contributes to customer interest and loyalty, interview

responses revealed that firms often struggle with embedding environmental messaging into their broader operations in a credible and consistent way.

Sustainable marketing is currently undergoing a pivotal transition. It is no longer sufficient for companies to signal environmental passion through vague claims or symbolic gestures. Instead, they must build their communication on transparent practices, independently verified data, and evidence-based action. Authentic green marketing, as conceptualized by Peattie and Crane (2005), requires more than persuasive narratives—it demands strategic integration and operational credibility.

Authenticity emerged as a unifying theme across both the qualitative interviews and content analysis. Organizations that succeeded in sustainable communication were those that could support their claims with verifiable data and communicate not only their successes but also the limitations of their efforts.

These brands earned trust, particularly among increasingly informed and environmentally literate consumers. Participants repeatedly emphasized that vague or exaggerated claims are no longer accepted at face value. When companies overpromise and underdeliver, the reputational consequences can be severe, including both consumer backlash and legal repercussions.

These insights are strongly supported by existing literature. Research by Lyon and Montgomery (2015) highlights that genuine environmental messaging is a decisive factor in building consumer trust and influencing purchase decisions. Any form of mixed or misleading communication, regardless of its original intent, can damage a company's image in lasting ways. To avoid this, environmental values must be embedded into the core of business operations, not merely into communication campaigns.

Industry-specific dynamics also shape how sustainable marketing is practiced. In sectors such as fashion, beauty, and food—where companies maintain direct relationships with end consumers—sustainability narratives are often lifestyle-driven.

These narratives resonate on an emotional level, reflecting personal values and everyday choices. By contrast, in industries like energy and manufacturing, sustainability communication is more technical in nature, focusing on performance metrics, compliance standards, and long-term outcomes.

These differences align with the sectoral communication norms identified by Kotler *et al.* (2021), who argue that factual, evidence-based communication performs better in regulated sectors, while emotional appeals are more effective in consumer-oriented markets. The most successful campaigns, however, are those that blend the power of emotion with the clarity of verified information, adapting to the expectations and realities of each industry.

Furthermore, interview results reaffirm Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, as localized communication campaigns proved to be more effective when aligned with regional cultural norms. In today's globalized and culturally diverse marketplace, a one-size-fits-all strategy in sustainability communication is no longer viable.

Despite growing interest in sustainable communication, companies continue to face internal challenges in aligning messaging with organizational behavior. Respondents noted that marketing departments often lead sustainability messaging, but they depend heavily on operational, procurement, and legal teams for access to accurate and transparent information. This interdependence suggests the need for integrated sustainability governance structures that foster collaboration across departments.

Academic frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997) and integrated reporting models (Eccles and Krzus, 2018) support this systemic approach. Effective environmental communication must reflect the actual state of organizational practices. Companies that align sustainability across the entire value chain—from product development to after-sales support—are in a better position to deliver coherent, trustworthy communication.

The implications of this research for marketing practitioners are both strategic and operational. To begin with, marketers need access to foundational sustainability knowledge. A strong understanding of environmental science, regulatory trends, and life cycle analysis enables marketing professionals to craft accurate and responsible messages.

To support this, companies should establish cross-functional sustainability teams that include marketing, operations, CSR, legal, and compliance personnel. These interdisciplinary teams ensure that sustainability communication is not an isolated function but an integrated element of business strategy.

Moreover, long-term storytelling should replace short-term, campaign-based thinking. Consistent and sustained messaging builds consumer trust and reinforces brand associations with sustainability. Companies must maintain open and honest dialogue with their customers—sharing successes and acknowledging ongoing challenges. Today's consumers do not expect perfection, but they do expect transparency. Businesses that communicate progress honestly, rather than exaggerating their achievements, are far more likely to gain the loyalty and trust of their audience.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study adds meaningful insight to the growing field of sustainable marketing by showing that, while many organizations increasingly understand the strategic importance of embedding environmental values into their communication with customers, there remains a noticeable gap between what is promised and what is

actually practiced. The findings underline that authenticity—supported by clear data and reflected in real operational efforts—is not just valuable but necessary for building lasting customer trust and loyalty.

Both the survey responses and interview insights reveal that today's consumers are better informed about environmental issues and more critical of vague or exaggerated green claims. As a result, companies must move beyond symbolic gestures and demonstrate a genuine, transparent commitment to environmental responsibility.

The study also emphasizes the need to adapt sustainability communication to the unique demands of different industries and cultural environments. In customer-facing sectors like fashion or food, emotional storytelling often resonates most. In contrast, industries such as manufacturing or energy require messaging that is more focused on data, metrics, and compliance.

The most effective communication strategies are those that successfully blend emotional appeal with factual accuracy, while remaining grounded in the specific realities of their sector. Equally important is internal alignment: marketing teams rely heavily on the cooperation of colleagues in operations, legal, and CSR to ensure they share timely and accurate information. Without such collaboration, sustainability messaging risks becoming fragmented or inconsistent.

Strategically, this means organizations should prioritize building a shared foundation of sustainability knowledge that is easily accessible to marketing teams. Giving marketers the tools to understand environmental science, policy trends, and product life cycles helps ensure that messages are accurate, relevant, and credible.

One practical step toward this goal is the creation of cross-functional sustainability teams that include experts from different departments. These teams can work together to craft communication strategies that are not only aligned with core operations but also reflective of the organization's actual environmental performance.

Rather than focusing on short-lived marketing campaigns, companies should embrace long-term storytelling that reinforces consistent brand identity linked with sustainability. Consumers value openness and honesty. When companies are transparent not only about their achievements but also about the obstacles they still face, it builds trust and credibility—qualities that increasingly define competitive advantage in today's environmentally conscious market.

Looking ahead, future research should explore how these insights apply across a wider range of cultural settings and how they may evolve in light of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and immersive media. For marketing professionals and decision-makers alike, the conclusion is clear: sustainability must

not be seen as a side project or external obligation. It should be embedded into the core of the business—informing how companies operate, communicate, and build meaningful relationships with their customers.

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