

10 Tips *for* Fearless Communications

1 Admit to being a work in progress and be honest.

Business is a big ship. It doesn't turn on a dime. Corporate communicators need to educate the public about what it means to be sustainable or purpose-driven, while also earning good returns. Being a conscious capitalist, a B Corp or ESG compliant does not happen without focus, desire, research, commitment, money, time and a great deal of effort. Explain the process.

3 Set goals, celebrate achievements.

Don't wait until the company is perfect. By [stating sustainability goals](#), a company makes a commitment to do better, is incentivized to stay accountable, and has something to measure against.

5 Make your customer the lead character in your story.

[Brands](#) that cater to women are finally figuring this out by using women with real life, rather than supermodel, proportions in their ads.

7 Admit to being part of the problem.

Companies don't have to be perfect to talk about sustainability. [Eileen Fisher](#) is a great example. Admitting that the fashion industry is a large polluter is part of their campaign.

9 Know your audience.

And shape messaging to it. Nike did this [well](#) and [not so well](#) all within a year's time. (See above, re: work in progress.)

2 Start Internally.

Accomplish this by sharing corporate commitments with employees. Employees are a company's front line ambassadors. They need to think the company is authentic in its purpose first, so they can convey this mission alignment to the public.

4 Put your message into a story.

A good story prompts emotions in the listener, which elicit [hormones](#) that make us pay attention and feel aligned and happy. When a brand shares its story, audiences feel connected to it.

6 Keep it positive.

When the message seems too dire, people assume the problem is too large for them to make an impact so they don't try. This is one of the reasons it has been so hard to get people to care about the climate crisis. Companies have been successful by reversing the [focus to the positive](#) to get their point across.

8 Answer the question, "So What?"

Connect the dots, rather than leaving it for consumers to imply the why. Instead of talking about efforts to recycle, explain that by 2050, plastic is expected to be more prevalent in the ocean than fish, and so the company is investing in a circular economy.

10 Use this winning formula.

Problem, Action, Solution – Communicate your company's values by first explaining the problem the company is working to solve, the actions it is taking, and the solution it is achieving. This is a satisfying formula that customers can understand, buy into, and remember.

In many aspects of life, fear is a sign to act. If a company is afraid of what people will think or say, that's a clue to investigate the company's values and actions. If they are aligned, communicate them proactively and prolifically.

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