

# Marketing and sustainability

Closing the gaps

In partnership with:



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# This project was made possible thanks to the partnership of 34 of WFA's national advertiser associations



# Introduction



**“Sustainability is not a contest. The issues are too important. It’s time for all marketers to commit and get creative. We need to change the system collectively”**

**Conny Braams**, Chief Digital & Marketing Officer, Unilever

Many organisations and their marketing teams have made significant progress in the past decade in both adopting more sustainable business practices as well as increasing awareness of the world’s climate crisis. Yet this WFA study suggests that many gaps remain in our collective journey to a more sustainable future.

Strikingly, it is only too obvious that there remains a chasm between the urgent changes needed and the relatively modest steps that people are currently taking to reduce consumption and carbon emissions.

And as this report details, there are significant disconnects on many levels:

- Between consumers’ expectations of brands – and what they perceive brands are doing, with respect to the environment and sustainability;
- Between organisations’ efforts on sustainability – and what their marketing departments are communicating;
- Between the acknowledged power of brands to make a difference – and what they are doing, particularly to help consumers make better choices and live more sustainable lifestyles.

In this report, we will look at why these disconnects might exist, share initial recommendations for “closing the gaps” and explore how the power of marketing can be harnessed to shape a more sustainable future for society and the planet.

## Contacts



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# Executive summary

## People want brands to be part of the solution but for now they see us as part of the problem:

Regardless of age or geography, consumers expect businesses to act. People believe we have the power to make a difference and the pandemic has only strengthened that resolve. They expect brands to help them move towards a more sustainable future<sup>1</sup> – yet many feel the opposite is happening with some saying brands are actually making it harder for them to make informed choices.<sup>2</sup>

## Marketing is lagging:

Marketers share consumers' passion and belief that they can be a force for change yet marketing, as a function, lags behind the rest of their organisations. The potential for our profession and activity to being seen as part of the solution is some way from being realised.

## Sustainability is complex:

Established brands say sustainability is not an easy area to address – even definitions are inconsistent across the globe, for both marketers and consumers.

## Marketers face multiple challenges:

Part of the problem is organisational structure, as sustainability does not sit neatly into an existing function. There is also a lack of standardized measurement for marketing to monitor progress. Critically too, there is a knowledge gap amongst marketers.

## Sustainability will be as transformational as digital:

Analysis of companies which are further progressed in this area, typically with a Chief Sustainability Officer in place, suggests brands will need a similar transformative mindset as adopted during the 'digital revolution'. Marketers need to see the sustainability agenda as a new filter through which to see the entire ecosystem versus simply a new chapter in the marketing playbook.

## Courage with humility:

Whilst 89% say companies need to be braver in communicating their efforts, only a quarter do, in many cases due to the fear of consumer backlash. One solution to this may be in more humility within our communications with 90% agreeing that it is OK to admit you haven't fixed all your problems.

## Sustainability is not a zero-sum game:

UN Sustainable Development Goal #17 is about partnerships and it's clear we will need plenty of these to make a difference. The industry needs to create a shared agenda where all boats can rise. Shared inspiration to help marketing find its voice and be a force for good. Shared knowledge to educate ourselves and our customers.

## Marketing can be part of the solution:

That's why WFA members are developing a CMO-level commitment – The WFA Planet Pledge – to amplify existing efforts and introduce new actions that marketing leaders can initiate and champion, thereby playing a distinct role in support of the transition. To learn more visit

[wfaplanetpledge.org](https://wfaplanetpledge.org)

**“If you are a brand, then communicating around sustainability is the least you have to do. In the next five years, if you haven't got this base covered, then you're no longer a brand but a commodity.”**

**Peter Wright**

Former Chief Marketing Officer, IKEA



<sup>1</sup> Kearney Consumer survey, 2020

<sup>2</sup> “Selling Sustainability” guide by Futerra & BSR, 2015

# Our approach to this project

**“Sustainability is the mother of all challenges. We need to be humble, listen, educate ourselves and prove to the world that the creativity and innovation of our industry can make a positive difference.”**



**Stephan Loerke,**  
CEO, WFA

Sustainability has rapidly risen up marketers’ agendas. In WFA’s 2020 Marketer of the Future study, sustainability lagged at the bottom of the ‘current role’ options provided. Yet when we asked which areas would become more important over the next 5 years, sustainability leapt to the top of the list.

This focus was also underlined in WFA’s 2021 annual priorities study amongst global CMOs. Here we saw ‘sustainability and marketing’ move into the top 10 prompted priorities.

Whilst much work has already been done in relation to sustainability and consumers, when we look to the marketing industry specifically, there is a lack of insight. Given this dearth of information on a priority topic, we sought to gather knowledge from marketers around the world with the help of WFA’s network of national advertiser associations and our partners Project 17 and BVA Nudge Unit to build on existing consumer research.

There were three steps to our research initiative designed to better inform our industry with a view to taking informed action.

1. We conducted desk research drawing on an abundant body detailing consumer perceptions and expectations;
2. We were guided by in-depth qualitative Interviews with 13 global Chief Marketing Officers;
3. We culminated the project with a global quantitative study with Senior Marketers across 34 markets.

## Which of the following are currently part of your role?



## Which will be more important in 5 years time?



Source: 2020 WFA/2CV survey amongst 683 senior marketers across the globe

# Qualitative sample

Thank you to the 13 global CMOs who informed our initiative

- 
**Arjan Dijk**  
 SVP & Chief Marketing Officer
- 
**Aude Gandon**  
 Global Chief Marketing Officer
- 
**Cheryl Goh**  
 Group VP of Marketing & Sustainability
- 
**Conny Braams**  
 Chief Digital & Marketing Officer
- 
**Cristina Diezhandino**  
 Chief Marketing Officer
- 
**Eric Benoist**  
 Global Marketing and Commercial Director
- 
**Fabrice Beaulieu**  
 EVP Group Marketing Excellence and EVP Category Development Organisation Hygiene
- 
**Filip Engel**  
 Vice President Ørsted
- 
**Ivan Pollard**  
 SVP, Global Chief Marketing Officer
- 
**Peter Wright**  
 (Former) Chief Marketing Officer
- 
**Raja Rajamannar**  
 Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
- 
**Rupen Desai**  
 Global CMO Dole Packaged Foods
- 
**Valérie Hernando-Pressé**  
 Chief Marketing Officer

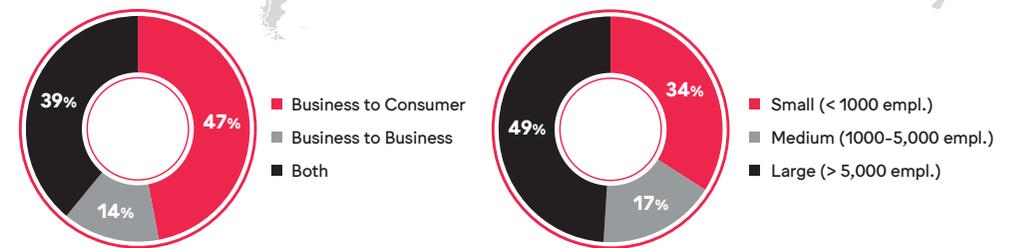
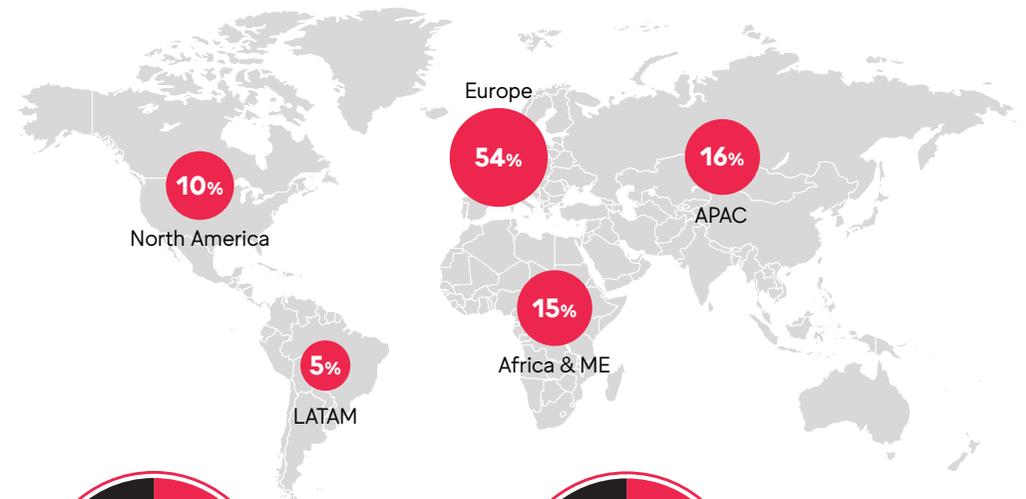
# Quantitative sample

The quantitative sample survey drew responses from over 650 marketers from 34 markets around the world, including a wide mix of geographies, company sizes and categories.

It is important to highlight that this survey experienced a much lower completion rate than past studies of this nature. Our hypothesis is that those who responded were more likely to come from organisations further along in their sustainability journey – and thus, more comfortable to speak to the topic.

Unless stated otherwise, all insights in this report are from WFA’s global survey on ‘Sustainability and Marketing’ conducted in partnership with Project 17 and BVA Nudge Unit between January and March 2021.

## Percentage of respondents from each region



# Consumer perceptions and expectations



**“People expect brands to do a lot more. By authentically aligning a brand’s purpose to the issues that really matter to people, the problems that need solving in society, marketers have an opportunity to take action to drive positive change.”**

**Conny Braams**, Chief Digital & Marketing Officer, Unilever

Consumers are an appropriate starting point for this effort, as their expectations shape marketers’ actions. Several studies suggest consumers are sending marketers clear messages related to sustainability and the pandemic has only served to strengthen people’s convictions.

According to a global study by Boston Consulting Group in July 2020, 70% said they were more aware now than before COVID-19 that human activity threatens the climate and that degradation of the environment, in turn, threatens humans<sup>3</sup>.

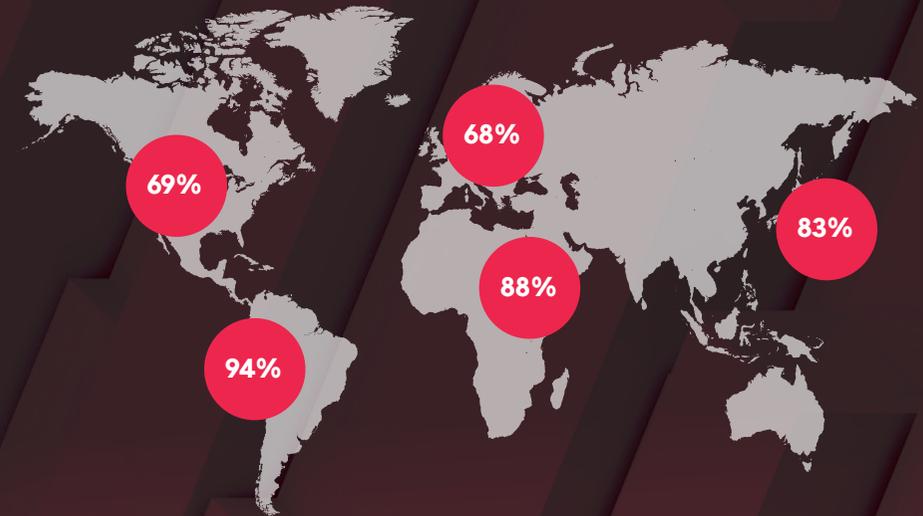
According to Nielsen, 80% of consumers around the world expect companies to help improve the environment<sup>4</sup>. The perception that companies can, and need to, make a difference is especially pronounced in Latin America, Africa & the Middle East and Asia-Pacific.

The vast majority of younger consumers (and nearly half of Gen-X) intend to make changes in their personal habits to reduce their environmental impact.

<sup>3</sup> Global research by Boston Consulting Group, July 2020

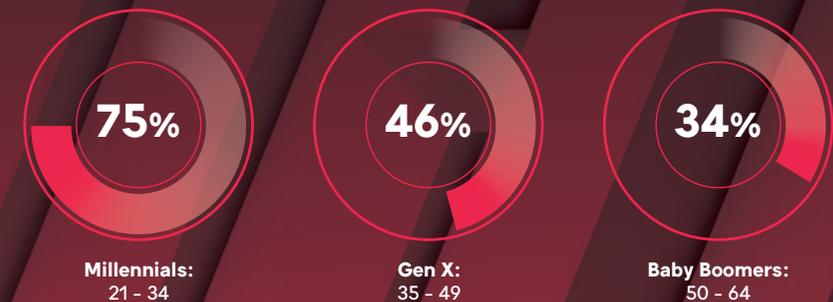
<sup>4</sup> Nielsen research, “Sustainable shoppers buy the change they wish to see in the world”, 2018

**“It is extremely or very important that companies implement programs to improve the environment”**



Source: Global research by Boston Consulting Group, July 2020

**“I definitely or probably will change my purchase/consumption habits to reduce my impact on the environment”**



Source: Nielsen research, “Sustainable shoppers buy the change they wish to see in the world”, 2018

Over half in the U.S. and UK believe that they have agency to make a big difference, through their personal actions and decisions – and nearly all would welcome and expect brands to help them be more environmentally friendly.

Yet worryingly, more than 40% feel that brands are actually making it harder for them to act sustainably. This may well be tied to perceptions of marketing as a driver of consumption – and thus part of the problem, rather than a force for good<sup>5</sup>.

Collectively, the consumer research available speaks to the presence of an ‘intent to action’ gap, in which many consumers would like to act and live more sustainably, yet they are not doing so. Moreover, they don’t perceive brands to be an ally in their efforts.

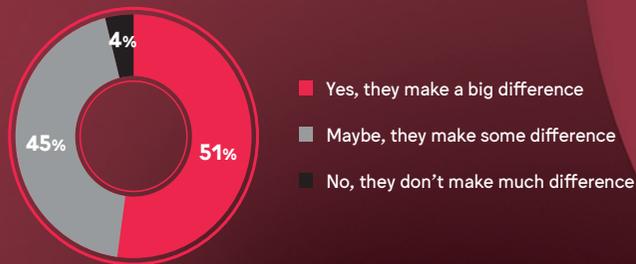
This clearly represents a missed opportunity, both for the planet and for brand owners.

**“There is enough data to show that people are using the power of their wallets to make moral choices in life. This is not limited to the younger generation alone. And even more surprising, it’s far stronger in emerging economies. China, Brazil and India leading the way ahead of the US and Europe.”**

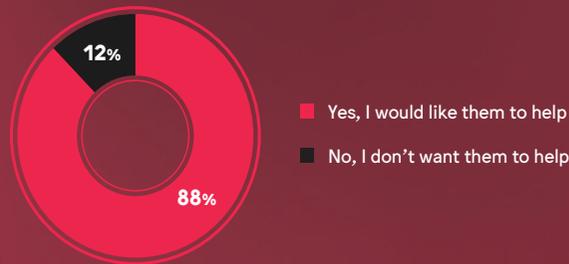
**Rupen Desai**, Global CMO,  
Dole Packaged Foods



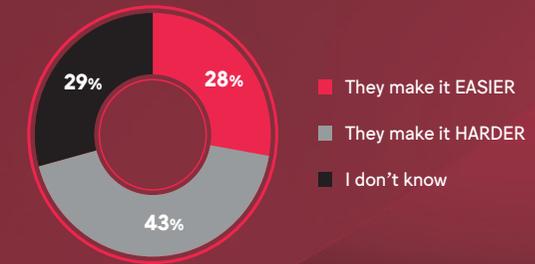
**Do you think personal actions (like donating, recycling or buying ethically) can make a real difference in the world?**



**Would you like brands to help you be more environmentally friendly and ethical in your daily life?**



**Do brands make it easier or harder for you to be environmentally friendly and ethical in your daily life?**



<sup>5</sup> “Selling Sustainability” guide by Futerra & BSR, 2015 Survey of 1,004 respondents in the USA and UK. November 2018 for Futerra by OnePulse

## Regional differences

As Latana's work highlights<sup>6</sup>, consumers have varying definitions and priorities tied to sustainability around the world.

### What consumers think 'being environmentally sustainable' means

Over-represented items per country



Underlining the complexity of this topic, when asked, our marketers from 34 countries around the world offered varied definitions of sustainability; covering anything from water waste, to plastic and packaging, responsible and ethical production of goods, human rights, diversity and inclusion, societal impact, future of our planet, responsible business practices and circular economy.

When focusing on the SDGs, as the vast majority of our respondents do, we witnessed differing priorities by region as follows.

**North America:** Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) & Gender Equality (SDG 5)

**LATAM:** Climate Action (SDG 13)

**Europe:** Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate action (SDG 13)

**Middle East & Africa:** Gender Equality (SDG 5)

**APAC:** Good Health & Well-being (SDG 3)

<sup>6</sup> Latana - Sustainability Perception Index - Ranking 2020

# Marketers' perceptions of consumer expectations



**“We are in an era of ‘show me, don’t tell me’. So the more you act, even in a small way, the better. Consumers want to know what you are doing now, not in five years. That’s an important shift.”**

**Valérie Hernando-Pressé**  
Chief Marketing Officer, Danone Group

For their part, global marketers generally acknowledge consumers’ expectations and perceive that the pandemic will only accelerate the importance of sustainability concerns. Whilst the sustainability credentials of a brand may not yet have primacy in purchase decisions, there is a sense that they are increasingly becoming part of the consideration set of many consumers and are an important part of

the equation alongside more traditional drivers such as price, availability and convenience. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that consumers are already voting with their wallets<sup>7</sup>.

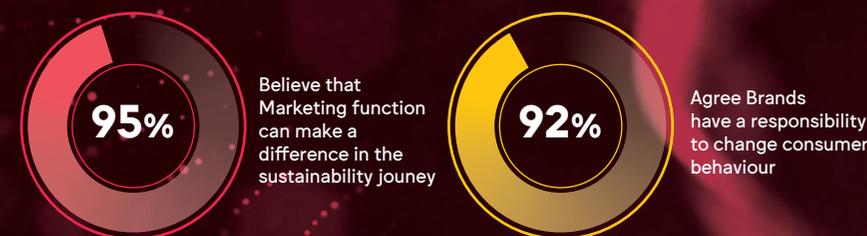
Specifically, they understand that people expect brands to help improve the environment - and want brands to help them be more environmentally friendly.

## Marketers believe that:



<sup>7</sup> FuterraBSR\_SellingSustainability2015

In addition, marketers clearly acknowledge their own power and ability to make a difference, as seen by very high levels of agreement on our questions tied to their role and responsibility:



**80% CONSUMERS**

feel that it is important that companies help improve the environment\*

VS

**88% MARKETERS**

agree\*\* that consumers fundamentally expect brands to help improve the environment

\*Nielsen research, “Sustainable shoppers buy the change they wish to see in the world”, 2018

\*\*WFA's global survey on 'Sustainability and Marketing' January and March 2021.

# Marketers' perceptions and experiences

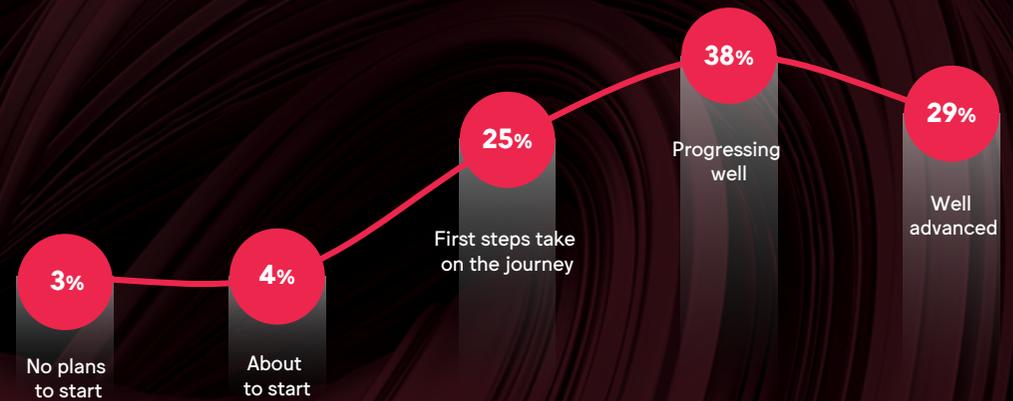
**“When we accelerated communication about our sustainability goals, it fueled and inspired business transformation. By communicating this attractive destination, the future for the company, it inspired the business to accelerate change and helped grow the brand. Communication was one of the key drivers in making the change happen.”**



**Filip Engel**  
Vice President, Ørsted

Our respondents<sup>8</sup> generally have a favourable perception of their organisations' commitment to sustainability. In fact, approximately two in three believe that their company is 'progressing well' or 'well advanced' on the sustainability journey – and nearly 75% feel that they 'have a good story to tell' externally regarding sustainability.

**How far along are you in terms of applying your company's sustainability agenda?**



<sup>8</sup> Note: our respondents were marketers who felt well enough informed to share their thoughts, perceptions and actions relating to marketing and sustainability. Our sample may therefore be viewed as more 'progressive' on this topic than the 'average' marketer/organisation.

**“The SDGs, in my view, are fundamental if we want to get marketing on a journey towards a more positive contribution to our future.”**

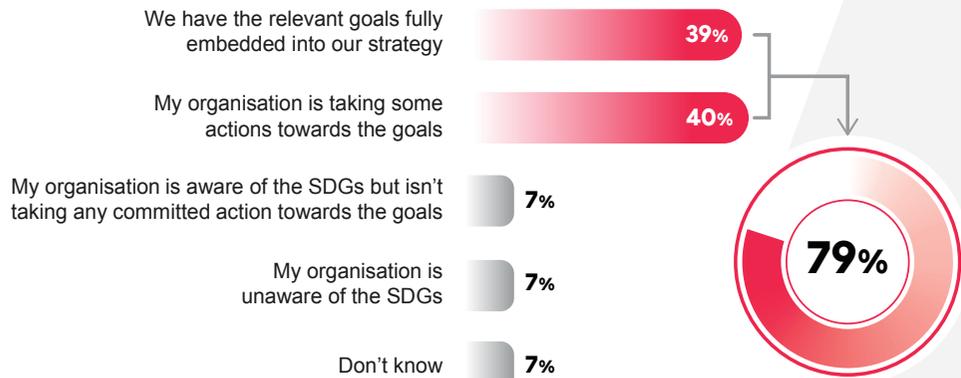


**Fabrice Beaulieu**, EVP Group Marketing Excellence and  
EVP Category Development Organisation Hygiene, Reckitt

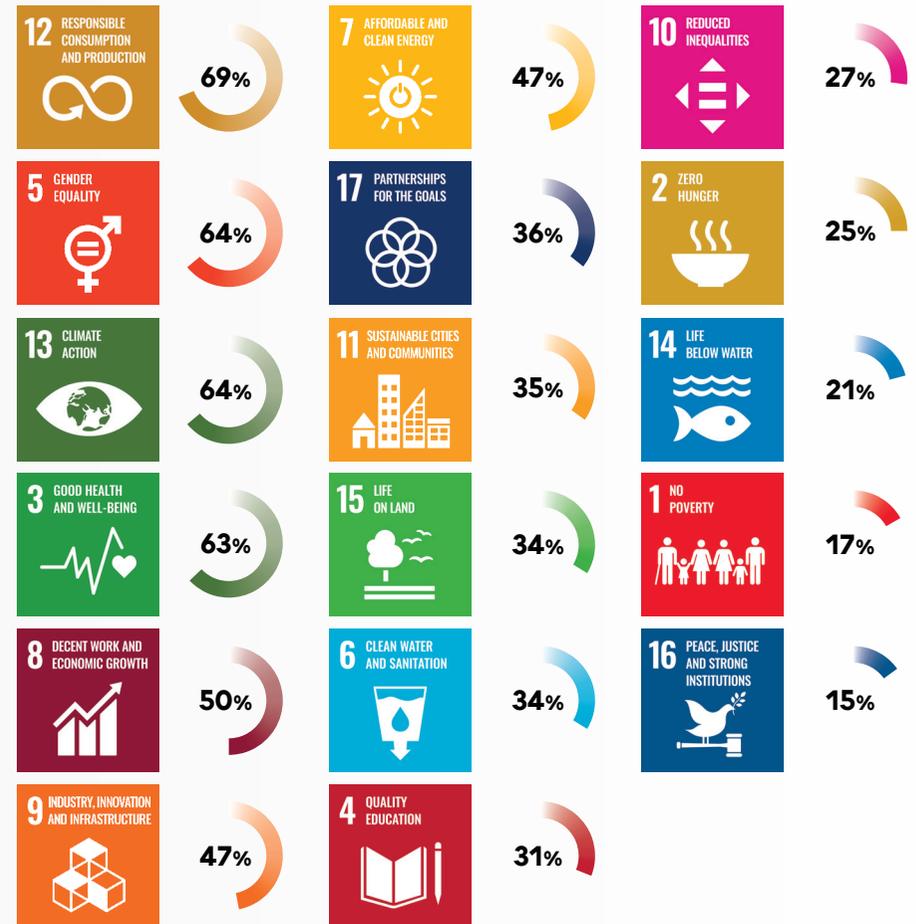
The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are clearly a galvanizing force in these efforts, as nearly 80% reported taking actions tied specifically to these goals. Among the 17 SDGs, four were cited most frequently as relevant:

- SDG 3: Good Health & Well-Being
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action

**Is there an awareness within your organisation of the SDGs?**



**Relevance of the SDGs for organisations**



# The goals around the world

When comparing to global norms, we also see different priorities and we've noticed specific needs and views on the topic across the regions, called out below.

## North America – More hesitation on the climate agenda

- Slightly behind the global average in terms of imbedding SDGs into their business strategies;
- Far less intention to bring in a Chief Sustainability Officer versus other regions;
- Majority claim not to have sustainability as a KPI on their marketing dashboard;
- More perceived 'fear' in terms of communications e.g. 'greenwashing' and 'Communicating where we've done well may lead to criticism where we may not have';
- More emphasis on brand owners looking to their agencies/ partners to do more.

## LATAM – Collaboration is key

- Over-indexing on collaboration with Public & Government affairs and Cross-functional teams in terms of defining their sustainability strategies;
- More of an emphasis on sustainability literacy as an opportunity when compared to other parts of the world.



## Europe – Onus on brand owners

- European-based marketers have an almost universal belief that brands have a responsibility to change consumer behaviour;
- Stronger fear of ‘greenwashing’ in the region, compared with other parts of the world.

## In detail: Nordics – Sustainability pioneers

- The most ‘advanced’ when compared with the rest of the world with SDGs fully embedded into business strategies;
- Far higher penetration of Chief Sustainability Officers and see sustainability as a business opportunity;
- Marketers are more proud to tell their story, but still hold a fear of ‘greenwashing’.



### APAC – Passion for change

- Showing great appetite to ‘catch up’, with a higher intent to bring a CSO in the immediate future as well as a willingness to measure sustainability efforts;
- The lack of literacy in terms of sustainability stands out as a key challenge in the region;
- The pandemic has notably accelerated businesses’ involvement on societal issues;
- Stronger belief that consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products.

### Middle East & Africa – Leadership latency

- Stronger belief that sustainability is an issue that needs to be led by C-suite and a complete rethink of what and how we consume is needed;
- Slightly more reticent to start on the sustainability journey, also a bit behind other regions to embed the SDGs in the business strategy;
- The marketers in this region need for more “Internal commitments to sustainability-oriented advertising or broader communications spend.”



**“I am a strong believer that, whether it is purpose, or a more positive view of how business is done in context to people, communities and planet, it has to start and end with building this into the business model. As an organisation, if ‘how you make money’ is not aligned with prosperity for people and the planet, it is very difficult to have any significant or sustainable impact.”**



**Rupen Desai**, Global CMO, Dole Packaged Foods

Marketers also report a high level of senior level commitment to sustainability, with a majority citing the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Board of Directors involved in shaping the sustainability strategy.

Importantly, a vast majority perceived that their organisation clearly viewed sustainability as a business opportunity, which is central to their business model. Yet over 50% admit that their company has ‘problems reconciling current practices on where they intend to go’ suggesting a tension which we will explore later in this report.



Specifically, many marketers perceive an opportunity to innovate, create competitive advantage and to educate consumers in their choices and actions.

### Opportunities in realising sustainability ambitions



# Organisational maturity

When we cross-tab our global data between the quarter of our sample who are at an ‘early stage’ of their sustainability transformation versus the nearly one in three who saw themselves as ‘well advanced’ some notable differences emerge.

## Early-Stage

- Lower awareness of the SDGs;
- Do not have a Chief Sustainability Officer and don't plan to bring one in;
- Unclear leadership vision: “I believe my company still has problems reconciling current practices on where we intend to go”;
- Although they are not yet measuring the sustainability efforts, they intend to;
- Don't yet have the Sustainability KPI on the marketing dashboard ;
- Need to improve their sustainability narrative;
- Struggle with the lack of (clear) internal processes.

VS.

25%

29%

## Well Advanced

- Relevant Goals fully embedded into the strategy;
- Senior leadership engagement: they have the board/ senior management, Chief Sustainability Officer and Chief Strategy Officer involved in shaping the sustainability strategy more than the average;
- Sustainability central to the business model and taken seriously as a business opportunity;
- Place a higher importance on measurement of sustainability efforts by using third party tools (independent organisations, academia etc) to a higher extent than the rest;
- Have the sustainability KPI on the marketing dashboard;
- Show more openness to partner with activists more than the rest of the companies;
- They invest in capabilities building training for sustainability across the entire organisation;

# The gap between sustainability & marketing

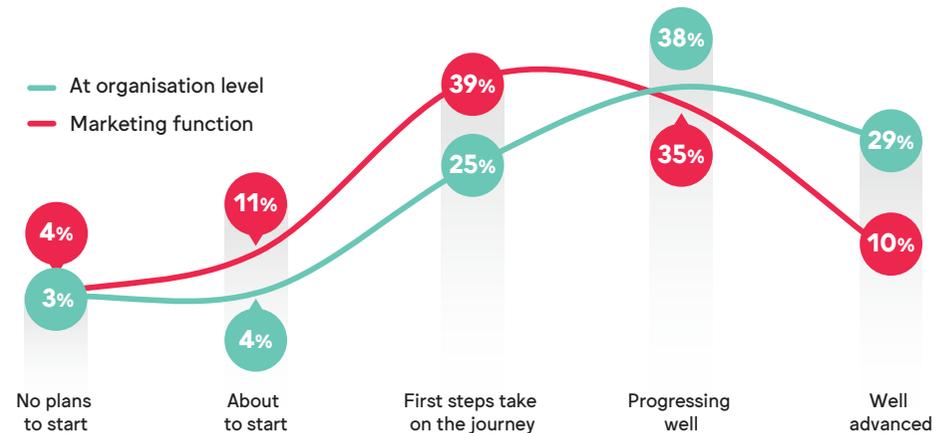
“Sustainability can be defined in many ways. But one definition, at least to us, is about creating long-term value for your stakeholders. Marketing’s role is about articulating that value proposition to your customers. And I think that is that is what a lot of companies struggle with.”



Filip Engel, Vice President, Ørsted

So, if many organisations feel they are committed to sustainability at the highest levels, one important question is why consumers generally don’t perceive that. The answer appears to be that marketing lags significantly on the sustainability journey, as over 50% describe their marketing organisation as ‘about to start’ or still taking ‘first steps’.

## Marketing lags on the sustainability maturity journey



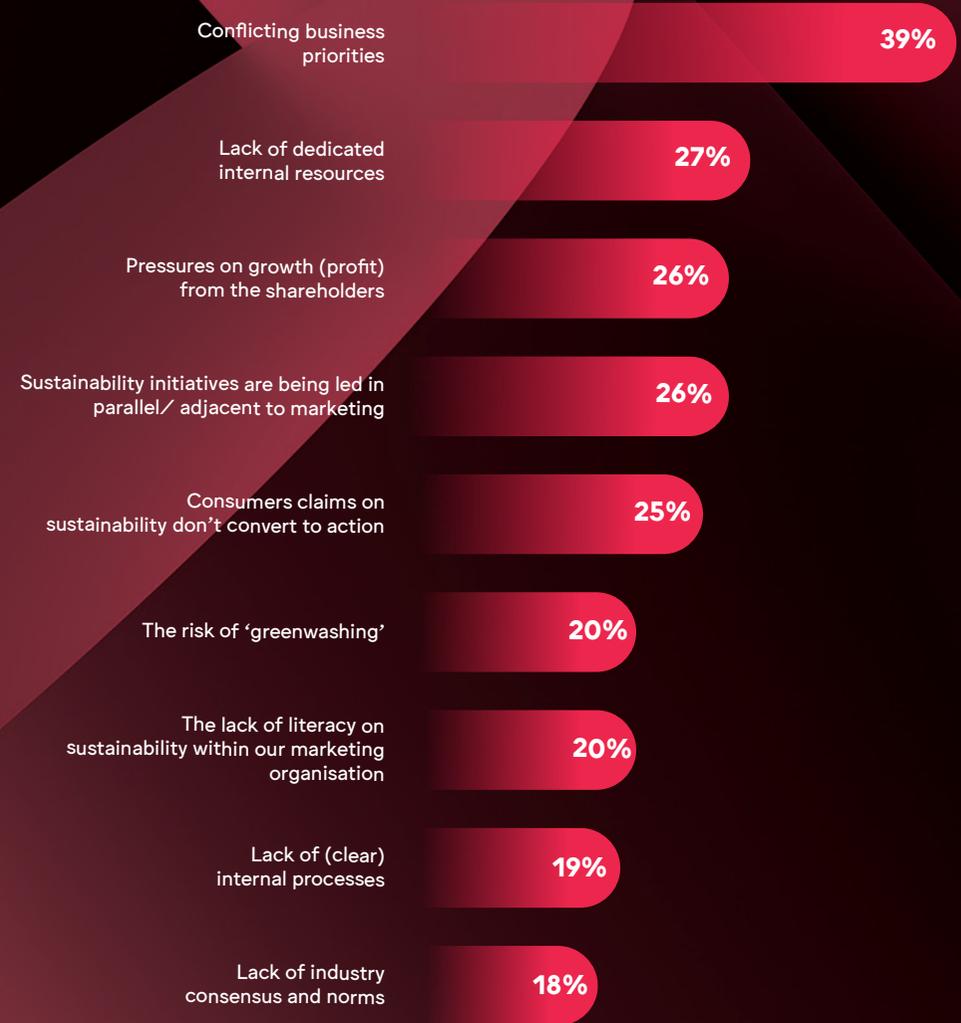
Tied to this, most marketing departments do not yet feel ready to tell their organisations’ sustainability story. Whilst some organisations see consumers as forgiving, many fear that they will be perceived to lack authenticity - or criticized for their performance in other areas.

**Do you feel your organisation has a good sustainability story to tell externally to your consumers?**



When senior marketers were asked directly about the greatest challenges to realizing sustainability ambitions within their teams, there were many issue areas which resonated, though no single factor emerges as dominant yet.

**Challenges in realising sustainability ambitions**



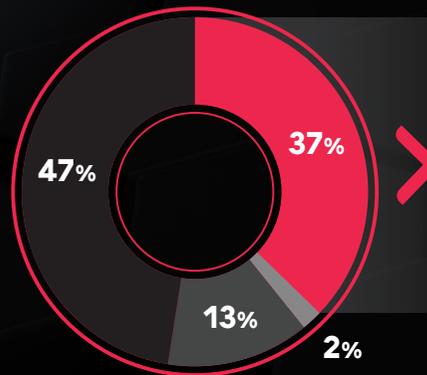
However, this study revealed several hypotheses as to why marketing is trailing, rather than leading, in the sustainability effort:

## 1. Structural barriers

One contributing factor may be structural, as most organisations do not have a Chief Sustainability Officer. And among those that do, the majority report to the CEO, with very few (9%) reporting to the CMO. This points to a potential disconnect between organisational sustainability efforts and the marketing function.

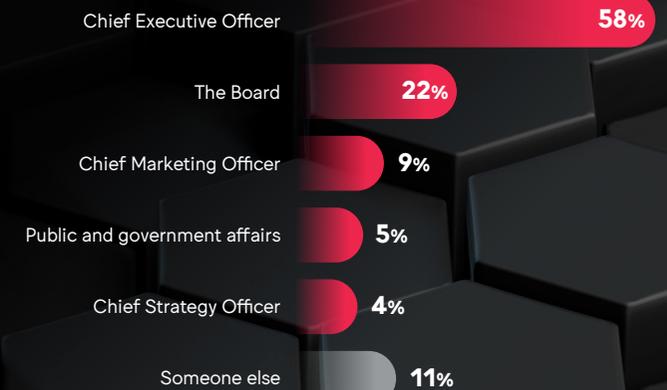
Whilst many companies are keen to avoid another potential silo, sustainability may require the dedicated leadership and knowledge of a Chief Strategy Officer to spearhead change. This could be analogous to the way the Chief Digital Officer has been charged with guiding organisations through a digital transformation.

Does your organisation have a Chief Sustainability Officer?



- Yes
- We had in the past, but removed the function
- We don't have, but intend to bring one
- No and we don't intend to have a CSO

Who does the Chief Sustainability Officer report into?

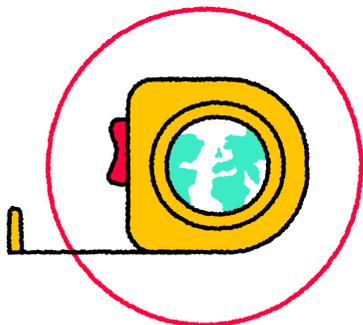


## 2. Ability to measure progress

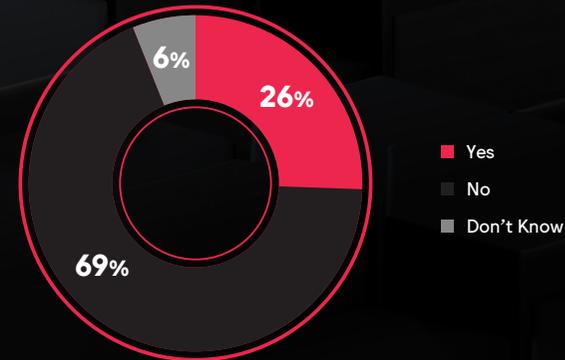
A second, possibly related, hypothesis relates to measurement as only one-third of organisations have sustainability as a KPI on their marketing dashboard.

Approximately 20% of marketing organisations are not measuring sustainability efforts at all – and those measuring are doing so in many different ways.

So, while the amount of measurement itself is relatively high, alignment is low. This means that organisations are unable to compare and gauge their efforts relative to others – and perhaps there is not a clear sense of ‘what good looks like’.



### Sustainability feature as a KPI on marketing dashboard



### Ways to measure sustainability progress



### 3. Sustainability knowledge gap

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, senior marketers clearly perceive that their marketing teams lack the knowledge/skills needed to talk about sustainability.

When asked about the capabilities of their marketing team, very clear perceived limitations emerge.

These three inter-related challenges speak to a larger reality: sustainability is complex. Owing to its multifactorial nature, it does not fit neatly into one specific business function – and it is not easy to measure or communicate.

Certainly, this complexity (and the potential for confusion and perceptions of greenwashing) has left many marketers hesitant to speak boldly and confidently on the subject.



### Capabilities of the marketing teams

We asked over 650 senior marketers around the world what's most needed to help achieve their sustainability ambitions.

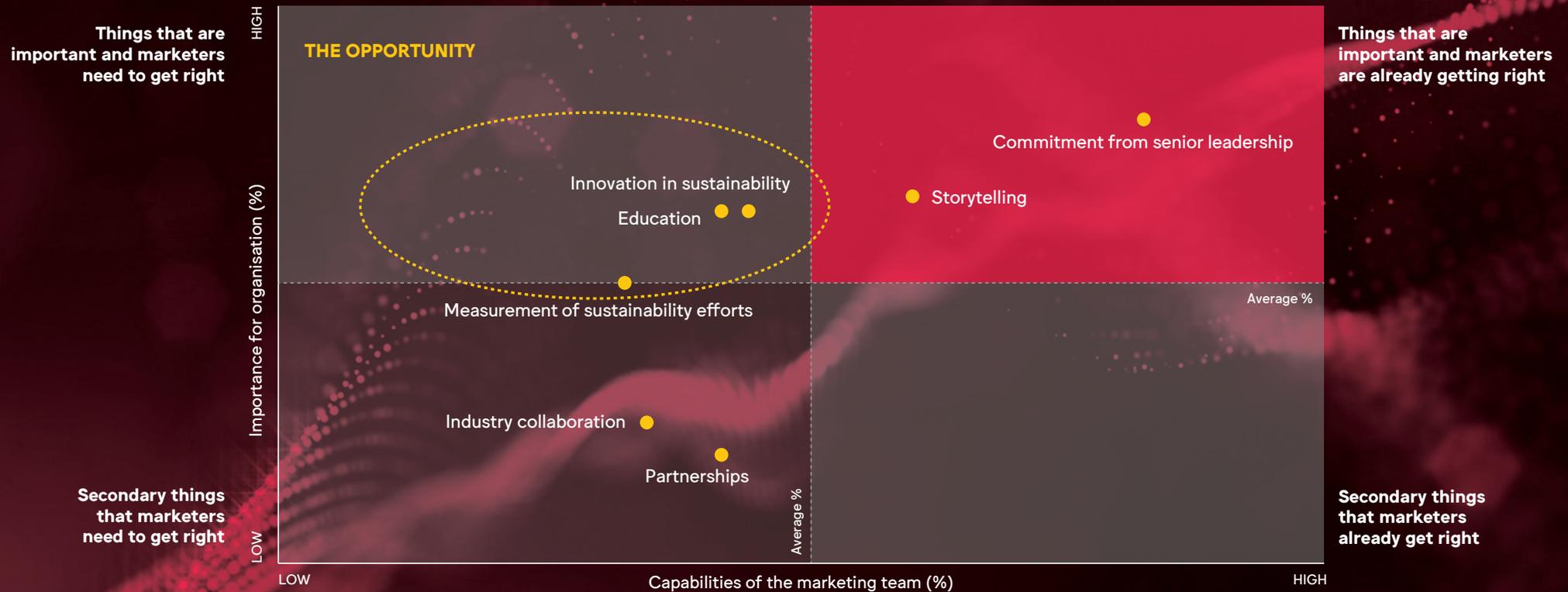


## Marketing and Sustainability – Gap analysis

To better understand the opportunities for marketers, we analysed what they see as important in the sustainability journey versus how their marketing teams currently performing in terms of capabilities.

This helps underline the gaps that exist in relation to education, collaboration and innovation.

Whilst many feel that commitment from leadership is not an issue measurement still poses a gap. That is mainly because, whilst there is a lot being measured, little of that is linked to marketing. Also a lack of standardisation makes benchmarking (and subsequent optimisation) far more challenging.



# Closing the gaps

**“If we take a leading stance on sustainability, as companies together, by driving the sustainability agenda and making concrete actions, that would give more confidence to consumers that we are positive economic agents, and not only interested in profit and shareholders. This is about industry as a force for good.”**

**Eric Benoist**, Global Marketing & Commercial Director, Pernod Ricard



The challenges our research outline lead to an obvious, but difficult question: How can we make a difference? Or perhaps, more specifically, how can we help marketers overcome these gaps and more fully support sustainability efforts?

When we asked marketers this question directly, it became clear that there was no single solution. However, it was notable that three most frequently cited strategies involved:

- Upskilling the marketing team;
- Committing to efforts to help consumers make sustainable choices; and
- Providing inspiration, via sustainability and marketing case studies.

## Achieving sustainability ambitions

Which of the below would help your marketing organisation to achieve their sustainability ambitions?



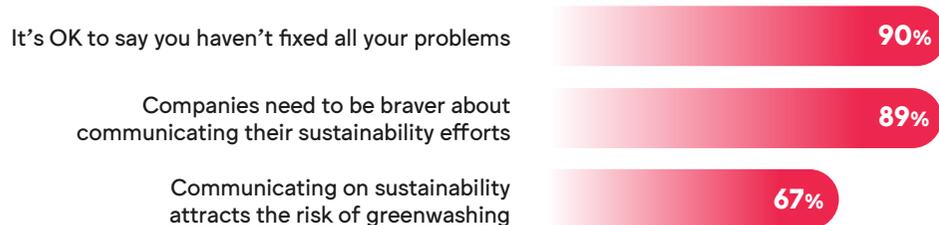
And in fact, these priorities link directly to the three core implications and action items identified in this study:

- The need for education of marketing teams;
- The opportunity for behaviour change; and
- The need for collective action.

# The need for education

The need for further education is clear – and not surprising, given the complexity of this topic. As a primary goal, this training should aim to provide marketers with the confidence and language to speak clearly and confidently about their organisation’s sustainability efforts. In fact, most agree that marketers need to be braver about communicating their sustainability efforts – and should be more comfortable acknowledging their ongoing challenges.

## Thinking generally about marketing communicating on sustainability, do you agree with the following?



**“One missed opportunity is not seeing employees as key stakeholders. That they also share the hunger to be part of the transformation, to be part of all the work we do is important. Sustainability is already part of our training and now we are revamping it.”**

**Aude Gandon**  
Global Chief Marketing Officer,  
Nestlé



# The opportunity for behaviour change

Finally, this study has identified and confirmed an important opportunity for marketers, tied to driving consumer behaviour change.

Helping consumers to buy and use more sustainably represents a largely untapped opportunity for marketers to make a significant difference.

Importantly, it also provides a way for marketers to ‘frame’ sustainability in a concrete, tangible and visceral way for consumers.

Most likely, these efforts will require a combination of continued education and applied behavioural science, to help ‘nudge’ consumers to adopt more sustainable habits.

In this way, marketers and consumers can make the difficult move from ‘intent to action’ on sustainability together.



**“I think the interesting part is how you use the power of marketing to change people’s behaviours around sustainability.”**



**Ivan Pollard,**  
SVP and Global Chief Marketing Officer,  
General Mills

# “Nudging” consumers to sustainable decisions & behaviours

Behavioural Science has the potential to play a valuable role in our collective journey to a more sustainable future.

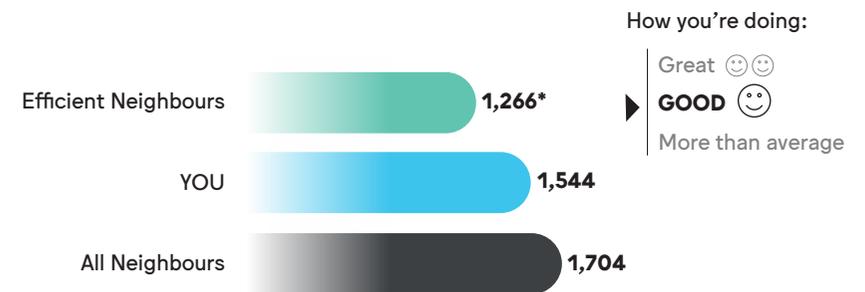
Rooted in the work of Nobel-Prize winning economists Daniel Kahneman, Richard Thaler (and many others), Behavioural Science focuses on understanding and influencing human behaviour through the lens of heuristics (such as Social Norms, Present Bias and Cognitive Scarcity). In this way, it can be viewed as complement to more traditional forms of marketing, which rely more on education and persuasion.

A core premise of Behavioural Science is that relatively small, inexpensive changes in communication or “choice architecture” (how ideas or options are presented) can have a disproportionately large impact on people’s decisions and actions.

One notable example involved a California utility, which changed its invoices to show how well customers were using energy, relative to their neighbours. This small change evoked Social Norms – and many people’s inherent competitiveness – and resulted in enormous improvements in energy conservation.

## Last Month Neighbor Comparison

you used **22% MORE** energy than your efficient neighbours



\*This energy index combines electricity (kWh) and natural gas (thermal) into a single measurement

Behavioural science tools have proven particularly effective in moving people ‘from intent to action’. In areas such as sustainability, personal health/hygiene and diversity/inclusion, where many people have positive intent (yet inconsistent follow-through), a series of small interventions (or “nudges”) can often help facilitate better choices and healthier habits.

**How can marketers develop effective ‘nudges’ to help consumers choose more environmentally-friendly products - and then use and dispose of them more sustainably?**

BVA Nudge Unit leverage a framework called the Drivers of Influence to help make behavioural science more accessible and applicable

The framework is a distillation of 21 of the most prevalent heuristics, which includes an explanation and real-life illustration of each driver. These ‘drivers’ are then used as a lens through which to understand current behaviour – and a source of inspiration to develop new interventions and optimize communications.

For example, BVA Nudge Unit may brainstorm together with marketers as to how a heuristic or ‘driver’, such as reciprocity, can be applied to encourage recycling.

Those looking for examples, case studies and inspiration can find them in numerous places, including:

The **Nudging for Good Awards**, sponsored by AIM (European Brands Association), which highlight the use of Behavioural Science to help consumers adopt healthy and sustainable behaviours.

The **Little Book of Green Nudges** from the United Nations Environment Program, which explains and shares of 40 nudge concepts to encourage sustainable behaviours

The **Playbook for Guiding Diners**, which shares insights and ‘nudge’ strategies derived from research conducted by the World Resource Institute (WRI) to promote selection of plant-based foods

## The Drivers of Influence

 <b>T</b> ransmitter <small>CHOOSE THE RIGHT MESSENGER TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE</small>	 <b>O</b> ne step at a time <small>MAKE THE TASK MORE MANAGEABLE BY BREAKING IT INTO SMALLER PARTS</small>
 <b>H</b> abits <small>PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ROUTINES THROUGH NEW CUES AND APPROPRIATE REWARDS</small>	 <b>F</b> raming <small>PRESENT OPTIONS IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES THE DESIRED CHOICE OR BEHAVIOUR</small>
 <b>E</b> go <small>REINFORCE SELF-IMAGE BY RECOGNISING AND REWARDING BEHAVIOUR</small>	 <b>I</b> mmediacy <small>PROVIDE BENEFITS OR REWARDS NOW, WHILST POSTPONING CONSTRAINTS</small>
 <b>D</b> efault <small>PRESENT A CHOICE WHERE THE PRE-SELECTED OPTION IS THE DESIRED BEHAVIOUR</small>	 <b>N</b> ostalgia <small>RECALL POSITIVE FEELINGS FROM THE PAST</small>
 <b>R</b> eciprocity <small>PROVIDE A SERVICE, GIFT OR HELP TO CREATE A SOCIAL DEBT AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO RETURN THE FAVOUR</small>	 <b>F</b> airness <small>APPEAL TO THE SUBJECT'S SENSE OF JUSTICE OR EQUITY</small>
 <b>I</b> ncentives <small>ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOUR WITH MONEY, GIFTS OR SOCIAL REWARD</small>	 <b>L</b> oss aversion <small>HIGHLIGHT SCARCITY OR POTENTIAL LOSS TO MAKE THE BEHAVIOUR MORE DESIRABLE</small>
 <b>V</b> alue <small>HIGHLIGHT THE SCOPE OF WORK, EFFORT OR SKILL INVESTED TO JUSTIFY THE PRICE</small>	 <b>U</b> pper anchoring <small>OR LOWER ANCHORING. USE REFERENCE POINTS TO CREATE FAVOURABLE COMPARISONS THAT ENCOURAGE THE DESIRED BEHAVIOUR</small>
 <b>E</b> motion <small>GENERATE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE THROUGH IMAGES, VISUALS AND STORIES</small>	 <b>E</b> asiness <small>MAKE THE DESIRED BEHAVIOUR THE EASIEST OPTION REQUIRING THE LEAST EFFORT</small>
 <b>R</b> einforcement <small>REWARD WITH POSITIVE FEEDBACK</small>	 <b>N</b> orms <small>USE THE POWER OF SOCIAL CONFORMITY TO ENCOURAGE THE DESIRED BEHAVIOUR</small>
 <b>S</b> alience <small>BE RELEVANT OR NOTICEABLE TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AT THE RIGHT TIME</small>	 <b>C</b> ompartmentalise <small>USE EASILY UNDERSTOOD IMAGES OR OBJECTS TO MAKE INVISIBLE ITEMS (LIKE EFFORT OR EXPENSE) TANGIBLE</small>
	 <b>E</b> ngagement <small>REQUEST A PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE DESIRED BEHAVIOUR</small>

# The need for collective action

There's widespread agreement regarding the need for collaborative action, most notably in developing a common language and set of metrics tied to sustainability.

## Thinking generally about marketing communications on sustainability, do you agree with the following?



Here, the SDGs provide a good template and starting point. Globally recognized and accepted objectives of this nature will ultimately help promote action, measurement and accountability by more clearly defining 'what good looks like'. And the survey suggests that most marketers would welcome collective efforts aimed at helping organisations to 'push' and inspire each other. To that end, the WFA, along with members of its CMO Forum, is developing the WFA Planet Pledge.

**"I see the WFA as a way for us advertisers to come together as an industry. To build an agenda together. Because there is going to be a need for education and leadership on that subject."**

**Aude Gandon,**  
Global Chief Marketing Officer, Nestlé





Building on the work that WFA member organisations have already contributed to the meeting the SDGs, the Planet Pledge provides a framework for members to:



1. **COMMIT** to being a part of, and a champion for, the global Race to Zero campaign, and encourage your marketing supply chain to do the same;



2. **SCALE** the capability of marketing organisations to lead for climate action, by providing tools and guidance for your marketers and agencies;



3. **HARNESS** the power of your marketing communications to drive more sustainable consumer behaviours;



4. **REINFORCE** a trustworthy marketing environment, where sustainability claims can be easily substantiated so that consumers can trust the marketing messages they are presented with.

**Be part of the change. Sign up.**

  
.....

[wfaplanetpledge.org](http://wfaplanetpledge.org)

The Pledge is designed to amplify existing efforts and direct WFA members and their value chain partners towards them. In addition, it introduces new actions that marketing leaders can initiate and champion, thereby playing a distinct role in support of the required transition.

.....

**“Our success depends on us creating a positive impact on society, wherever we live, work, source and sell. This requires us to harness our entire business, including our brands and employees, to ensure we promote sustainable, inclusive growth and support the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”**

**Cristina Diezhandino**, Chief Marketing Officer, Diageo





**Note:** All WFA benchmarks, survey results, agendas and minutes are reviewed by Hogan Lovells International LLP, our competition lawyers. WFA Competition law compliance policy:

The purpose of the WFA is to represent the interests of advertisers and to act as a forum for legitimate contacts between members of the advertising industry. It is obviously the policy of the WFA that it will not be used by any company to further any anti-competitive or collusive conduct, or to engage in other activities that could violate any antitrust or competition law, regulation, rule or directives of any country or otherwise impair full and fair competition. The WFA carries out regular checks to make sure that this policy is being strictly adhered to. As a condition of membership, members of the WFA acknowledge that their membership of the WFA is subject to the competition law rules and they agree to comply fully with those laws. Members agree that they will not use the WFA, directly or indirectly, (a) to reach or attempt to reach agreements or understandings with one or more of their competitors, (b) to obtain or attempt to obtain, or exchange or attempt to exchange, confidential or proprietary information regarding any other company other than in the context of a bona fide business or (c) to further any anti-competitive or collusive conduct, or to engage in other activities that could violate any antitrust or competition law, regulation, rule or directives of any country or otherwise impair full and fair competition.

The logo for the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), consisting of the letters 'WFA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font inside a white circle.

WFA

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