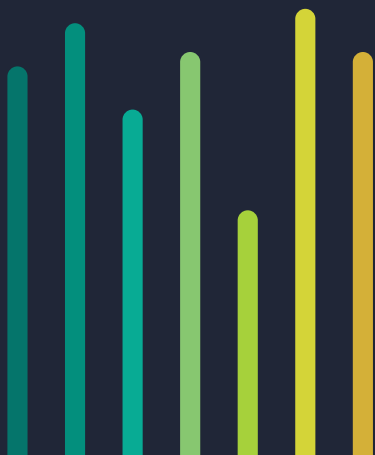




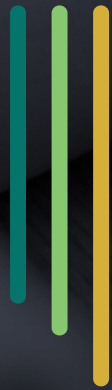
**2023**

**THE  
SUSTAINABILITY  
MARKETING  
SKILLS GAP  
REPORT**

**UPDATED**



# CONTENTS



03	FOREWORD - CHRIS DALY
04	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
05	THE SUSTAINABILITY SKILLS GAP
06	CONSUMER'S EXPECTATIONS OF MARKETERS AND VIEWS OF SUSTAINABILITY
09	TIGHTENING REGULATIONS AND THE FEAR OF GREENWASHING
10	REFRAMING YOUR PURPOSE
13	WHAT IS B CORP?
15	BEST IN CLASS
18	SUSTAINABILITY IN CAREERS
19	HOW CAN MARKETERS ADDRESS THE SUSTAINABILITY SKILLS GAP?
21	MARKETING'S ABILITY TO DRIVE CHANGE
22	TOP RECOMMENDATIONS
23	CONCLUSION

# FOREWORD

In the closing remarks of COP27, which took place in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated “We need to drastically reduce emissions now – and this is an issue this COP did not address”. Whilst COP27 struggled to address reducing emissions, one thing that did come out of the event was a “first of its kind” report focusing on the impact of “non-state entities” on climate change.

Commissioned the year previously during COP26, the report “slammed greenwashing” – misleading the public to believe that a company or entity is doing more to protect the environment than it is – as well as weak net-zero pledges. The report also provided a roadmap to bring integrity to net-zero commitments by industry, financial institutions, cities and regions and to support a global, equitable transition to a sustainable future.

The reports focus on “non-state entities” and their impact (or lack thereof) in the fight against climate change raises important questions around the role of marketing and its ability to drive positive change. As a function that sits at the centre of brand, communications, stakeholders and product development, marketers have a significant role to play at this critical juncture – both at an organisational and societal level.

Marketers have a great opportunity to champion getting back to the “core of what marketing is” - exploring, uncovering, and sharing what their organisations do, how they can make a difference while showcasing what needs to be done and supporting it with a strong business case.

The ongoing war in Ukraine and the ensuing cost of living crisis has highlighted the destabilising effect that our dependence on fossil fuels is capable of having and has



made clear a critical tension between business objectives and ethical drivers, with six in ten marketers (60%) claiming their company or clients find it tricky to achieve their sustainability commitments without compromising on commercial needs.

As marketers, we are each responsible for being proactive in implementing positive changes and embracing environmentally friendly working practices. Through our position at the heart of the organisation, we are also responsible for encouraging others to do the same. However, if the marketing profession is to deliver meaningful and tangible change at scale, then as an industry, we must do more to address the sustainability skills gap and ensure that marketers are equipped with the skills they need to work confidently on environmental campaigns which can encourage others, and drive the positive behavioural changes needed within society.

CIM’s purpose is to set the standard by which the profession operates. We encourage ethical working practices and aim to empower marketers with the skills they need to help deliver a more sustainable future.

**Chris Daly, CEO, CIM**

## A WORD FROM GEMMA BUTLER

*Co-founder of Can Marketing Save the Planet & former CIM marketing director*

We live in an age of growing authenticity and across every part of the stakeholder chain there are demands for transparency on sustainability practices. It has never been such an important priority. Ignoring the environmental crisis is not an option, and CIM’s Sustainability Skills Gap report shows that marketers who chose to do so, risk falling behind in their own careers and missing out on one of the biggest opportunities ahead. Marketers need to recognise that we are inherently part of the problem but can also be a significant part of the solution. The products and services we

market require energy or create waste, which is why we also need to look at being a “force for good” within our own organisations and be responsible for driving positive change from the top down. We need to use our skillsets to influence, change behaviours, drive innovation and build communities where collective action makes a difference.

– It is clear that organisations who do not have a solid sustainable development plan now risk consumers disengaging, employees leaving and investors refusing to invest. One of the immediate priorities for both business and society at large is the need educate ourselves, become more aware and acknowledge that we are all part of the solution when it comes to sustainable transformation.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## METHODOLOGY

- The research included in this report was undertaken by award-winning strategic insight agency Opinium on behalf of CIM. The report explores the views of marketers and consumers, over the past three years to show how views and the requirements of marketers have changed.
- The first survey looked at the views of 210 marketing professionals, and 2,000 UK adults aged 18 and above between 15 - 20 September 2021 and was carried out online. The results from the general population have been nationally weighted to be representative.
- An additional online survey of 1,193 respondents including CIM members was undertaken by CIM between 7 -13 September 2022 via the CIM LinkedIn channel. Finally, in April 2023 additional market insight, research and best practice was added through interviews with senior thought leaders.

### The Sector's Skills Gap

The first chapter of this report assesses the current industry landscape, and evaluates the shape of the sustainability skills gap. The research finds that two in five (40%) of marketers don't currently have marketing qualifications relating to sustainability, but promisingly are interested in receiving one.

### Consumers Expectations

This chapter of the report examines one of the key external pressures organisations are facing which is that consumer attitudes towards sustainable business practices are changing. It reveals consumers expect companies to be doing more when it comes to sustainability, with over six in ten (63%) adults agreeing that brands should increase communications around the sustainability of their products and services.

### Tightening of Regulations and Greenwashing

This chapter of the report examines the effect of tightening guidelines and regulations to combat "greenwashing", another external pressure which has a knock-on effect on marketing professionals and how they approach, plan and execute sustainability strategies, communications and campaigns. The data reveals that 49 per cent of marketers are wary of working on sustainability marketing campaigns due to the fear of their company or clients being accused of "greenwashing".

### Reframing your Purpose

The fourth chapter of the report explores how brands can re-imagine how they operate and introduces the concept of the triple bottom line and the circular economy. These models provide a new paradigm for business operations which place a value on moral purpose as well as financial achievements.

### What is B Corp

The fifth chapter examines the B Corp movement and explores the popularity of the credential, which has burgeoned with over 6,000 businesses in 80 countries in over 150 industries receiving the prestigious certification so far. We examine what the certification means to businesses and how brands can achieve the sought after B Corp status.

### Sustainability in Careers

Chapter six identifies the opportunities that organisational commitment to sustainability can bring when firms are seeking to hire new talent. Our research finds that nearly half (48%) of adults would be more willing to work for a company that they know has strong sustainability credentials.

### Recommendations & Conclusion

The final chapter of the report concludes the research and outlines CIM's recommendations on how marketing leaders can drive change effectively from within their organisations and create impactful sustainable marketing campaigns.

# THE SECTOR'S SKILLS GAP



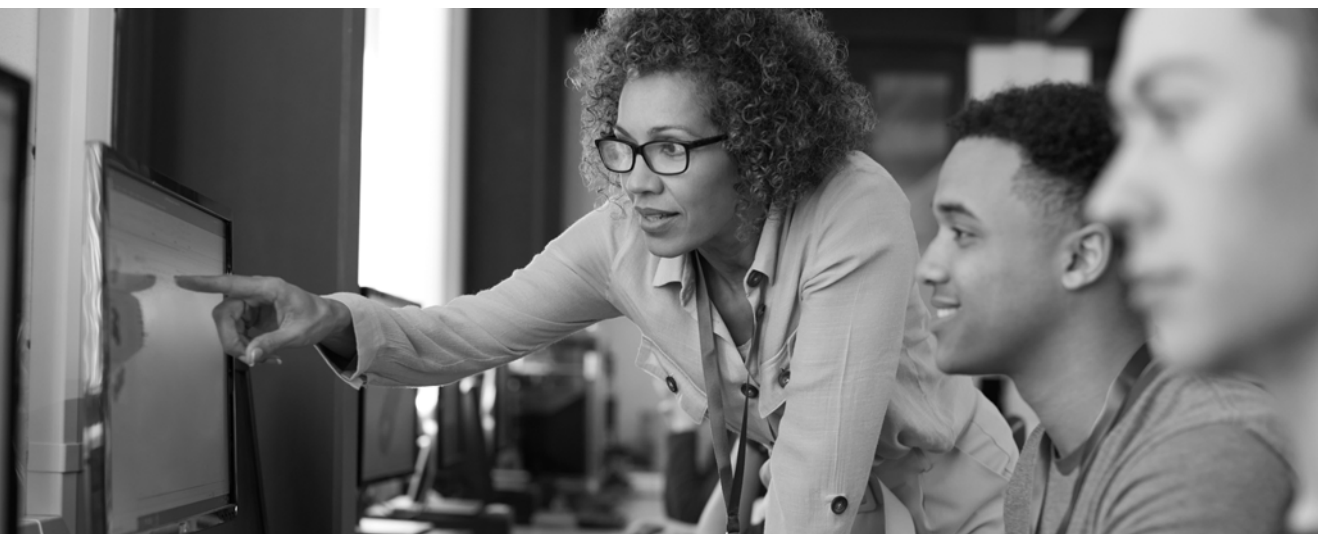
CIM's CMO75 which sought the views of 75 leading CMOs and marketing directors from around the world found that the skills gap is rapidly shifting, with 73 per cent of CMOs in marketing departments and agencies stating they were concerned about skills shortages. Interestingly, our research found that in-house marketers are more concerned about the skills shortages, 78 per cent, than their agency counterparts, 65 per cent.

Compounding the skills gap are the twin issues of recruitment, which was indicated as a source of concern by 72 per cent of respondents, and staff

retention, indicated as a concern by 61 per cent of respondents. Our research further identifies that agencies are struggling more with recruitment, 81 per cent, than in-house marketing teams, 67 per cent.

It's not just CIM who are seeing these trends, Hays Recruitment's research concludes:

- *93 per cent of employers experienced skill shortages in the last 12 months, up from 80 per cent last year.*
- *52 per cent of employees feel morale is being impacted by skills shortages.*



## The Sustainability Skills Gap

According to our research, three quarters (76%) of marketers say they have been involved in sustainability work in the last five years, and nearly half (45%) feel under pressure in their role to communicate their company or clients' sustainability credentials. But of course, if marketers want to instigate effective sustainability-led organisational strategies then they need to be equipped with the right tools and knowledge.

Our findings show that two in five (40%) marketers would like to attain a marketing qualification relating to sustainability but don't currently possess one.

Businesses and marketing agencies must make addressing this skills gap a priority, offering marketing departments relevant training and development in this continuously moving space, internally or externally.

We believe prioritising sustainable marketing skills can unleash a multitude of benefits both for individuals, businesses and wider society. Marketers will of course be more effective and confident in their roles, alleviating many of the pressures they're currently reporting. This in turn will also help organisations address the challenges and tensions they face in developing plans and working towards sustainability commitments alongside their commercial needs.



# CONSUMER'S EXPECTATIONS OF MARKETERS AND VIEWS ON SUSTAINABILITY

---

This need to tackle the skills gap and prepare our industry for the future is compounded by growing pressure, and an increasing expectation amongst consumers for companies to be doing more when it comes to sustainability.

According to our research, 63 per cent of all UK adults agree that brands should increase communications around the sustainability of their products and services. Despite this, only two in five (41%) marketers report that their companies or clients have publicly available sustainability commitments.

As we see consumer demands for further action and transparency grow, it's more important than ever for brands to prioritise and communicate their sustainability efforts, and crucially, follow through on the promises they make. In fact, our research finds that over three in five (63%) adults believe that many brands only get involved with sustainability for commercial reasons, as opposed to ethical reasons, highlighting the need for authentic and meaningful marketing to build consumers' trust.

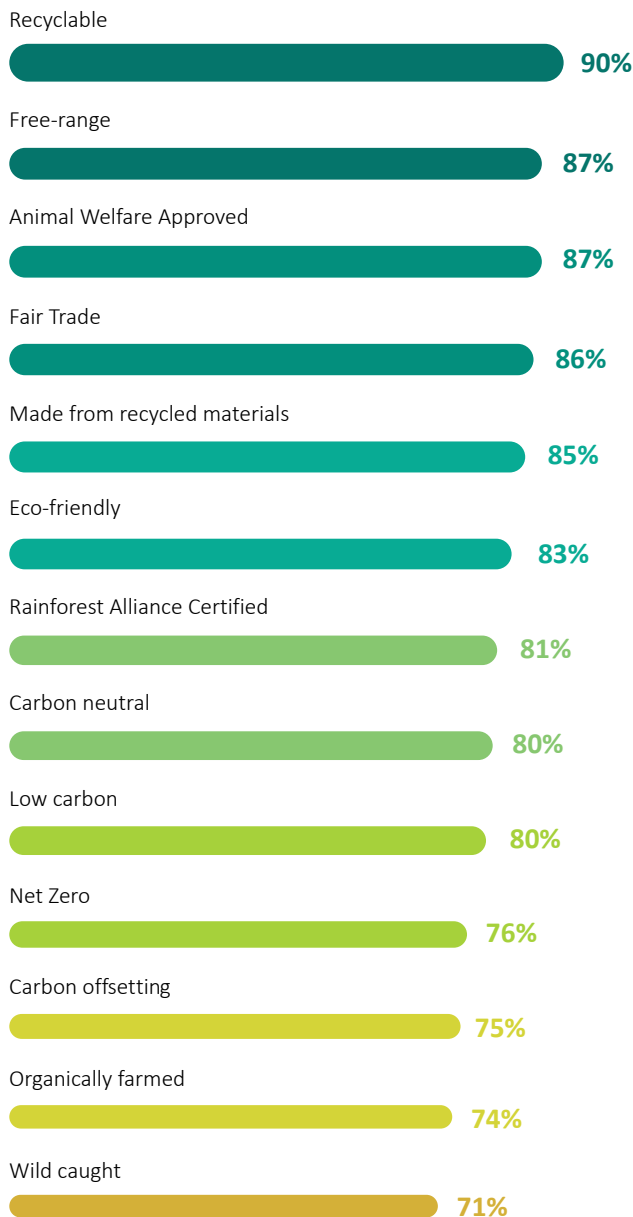
When asked who is responsible for checking the sustainability claims made by companies, over half

(56%) of consumers say they believe it should be independent trade bodies - such as the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) or the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) - who take the leading role. This compares to just 36 per cent who feel it should be the responsibility of the companies themselves, further demonstrating a lack of consumer trust in businesses.

Recently, we've seen younger age groups passionately demand action against climate issues, emerging as a key demographic for marketers to engage for sustainable products and services. Our own research reinforces this, and finds that 18-34 year olds are:

- More receptive to sustainable marketing- six in ten (59%) say they are more likely to buy products or services from a brand that advertises how sustainable they are, as opposed to just 31 per cent of those aged 55 and above.
- More trusting of brands that communicate sustainable efforts- 53 per cent are more likely to trust a brand that advertises and markets how sustainable they are, as opposed to just 33 per cent of those aged 55 and above.

## MOST IMPORTANT SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS FOR THE PRODUCTS PEOPLE BUY ACCORDING TO UK ADULTS:



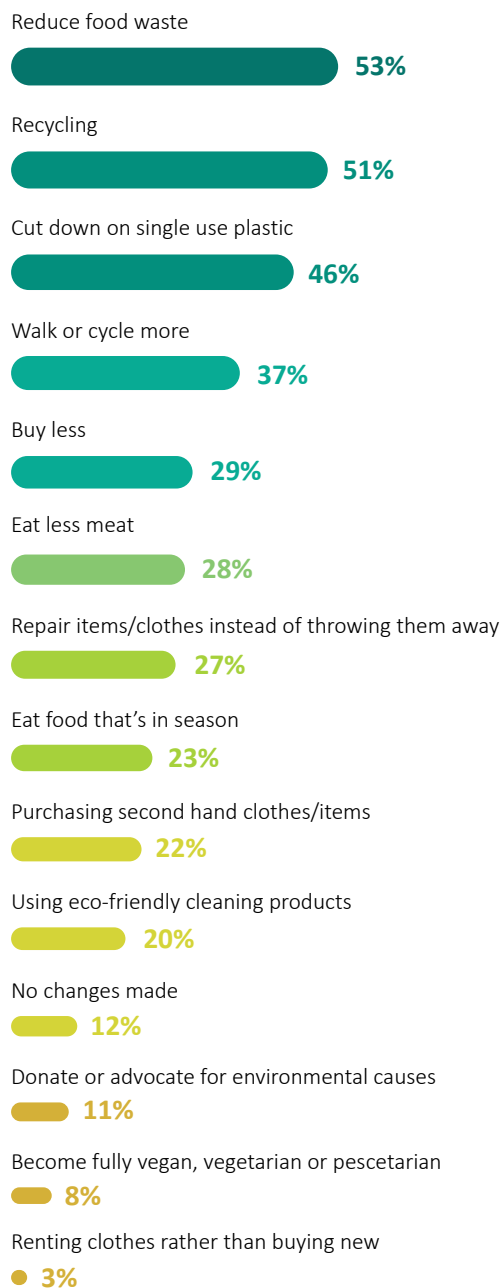
### Substantiate your claims

Whilst it is important for marketers to communicate their brand's sustainability credentials, it is also important to ensure that these claims are evidenced.

In February 2023 the [ASA updated their guidelines](#) and advise against the use of unqualified carbon neutral, net zero or similar environmental claims, explaining the basis for these claims helps consumers' understanding, and such information should not be omitted.

The Green Claims Code states - where general claims (eco-friendly, green or sustainable for example) are being made, the claim reflects the whole life cycle of the brand, product, business or service and is justified by the evidence.

## WAYS UK ADULTS HAVE MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS:





**53%**

of all UK adults don't always purchase sustainable products because they are more expensive than non-sustainable products

Recent adverse weather headlines and social conversations about climate change have made nearly half

**49%**

of adults consider how they can adapt their behaviours to be more sustainable in their day-to-day lives



## TOP THREE BRANDS ADULTS BELIEVE ARE LEADING ON SUSTAINABILITY:

**amazon**

Reasons given included because the company proactively discusses its efforts across sustainable products, packing and delivery, and its efforts with electric vehicles.

**co  
op**

Reasons given included because the company promotes air Trade items and its efforts with recycling.

**TESCO**

Reasons given included because the company has reduced food packaging and aims to give out of date food to those in need.





# TIGHTENING REGULATIONS AND THE FEAR OF GREENWASHING

---



The introduction of the “[Green Claims Code](#)” in September 2021 by the CMA has been a key step in the right direction, helping to ensure that brands making misleading claims are held accountable. The CMA continues to review the impact of misleading green claims online and offline, as well as those made instore and on packaging.

As stated by the CMA: “Brands who make claims found to be in breach of consumer protection law can be forced to make changes to claims issued, make payment of redress to any consumers who may have been harmed and in some cases may be subject to court proceedings.”

The CMA has recently [launched a further investigation](#) to determine how products and services claiming to be “eco-friendly” are being marketed, and whether consumers could be being misled. The CMA is also launching its first [sector specific investigation](#) into the practice of “greenwashing” in FMCG goods.

This regulatory change comes following a number of high-profile ASA rulings against global brand giants such as Ryanair, BMW and Royal Dutch Shell, who have all been accused of “greenwashing” through misleading advertising.

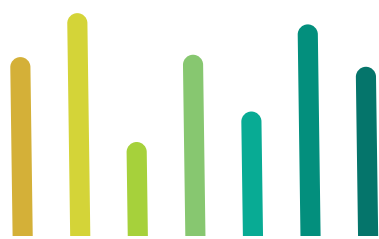
According to our research, this has had a negative impact on marketing professionals’ attitudes towards sustainability campaigns, with half (49%) saying they are wary of working on them due to fear of their company or clients being accused of “greenwashing”.

CIM welcomes the introduction of further legislation to ensure that environmental claims made by businesses are verifiable. We also passionately believe that marketers should not shy away from communicating on their sustainability credentials for fear of having their claims labelled as “greenwashing”. If anything, it should encourage them to upskill immediately, so they have the tools and knowledge to feed into effective sustainability led organisational strategies.

Despite these fears, over half (55%) of marketers recognise that sustainability is an increasing business priority, and 51 per cent go as far as to say that climate change could threaten their existence, raising alarms about the impact the climate crisis will have on businesses.

Although it’s clear that sustainability is a key topic in board rooms across the country, three in five (60%) marketers say it’s a challenge for their company or clients to achieve sustainability commitments while not compromising on commercial needs.

It is critical that marketers at every level stay up to date with what is happening in relation to “greenwashing” guidelines and regulation. “Greenwashing” not only places an organisation at risk of fines, but causes considerable damage to brand reputation, erodes stakeholder trust and can be a key factor in a potential employee's decision to work for an organisation.



# REFRAMING YOUR PURPOSE



The following is an extract from: *The Sustainable Business Book: Building a resilient modern business in six steps* by Kevin Duncan & Sarah Duncan.

Many businesses still see sustainability as a necessary evil – something they must now do whether they like it or not. Others, however, are seeing this as an opportunity to change the way they view success, redressing the bias towards the relentless pursuit of profit with little regard for the health of people and the planet.

Rather than focusing on the traditional bottom line, responsible businesses are adopting the triple bottom line – people, planet and profit (Figure 10). This term was coined by sustainability pioneer John Elkington. It describes a business model that forces companies to focus not just on profits but also on high business integrity and environmental sensitivity – resulting in both successful business strategy and moral business practices.

It should be noted that in his 2020 book *Green Swans*, Elkington talks of retracting the concept of the triple bottom line – not because it is bad, but because he is dismayed by how it is being used (or misused). Any businesses today are hiding behind the construct, just paying lip service to it and using it as a tick-box exercise, without any genuine desire to change the fundamentals of their commercially driven business models.



FIGURE 10 – The Triple Bottom Line<sup>1</sup>

Like so much surrounding sustainability, to create real change with integrity, it is important to embark on this journey with genuine commitment, not just for PR purposes. Profit is not in itself a bad thing – businesses need to be commercially viable. It’s how you make the profit and what you do with it that matters.

It takes time and effort to embed this thinking into a business. Financial reporting has internationally recognized frameworks. Non-financial reporting is less established and therefore less clearly and consistently measured.

Starting a modern business from scratch makes it proportionally easier to design every part of the process in a sustainable way, but this is much harder for older, established businesses.

**“ WE CANNOT SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH THE SAME THINKING WE USED WHEN WE CREATED THEM. ”**

*Albert Einstein*

In almost every case, the manufacturing process and the way these older companies are organised were not set up with people and the planet in mind – just profit. Many have tried to retrofit sustainable thinking into the business, but it’s not easy, and many fail.

Part of this failure can simply be down to entrenched executives still being trapped in old ways of thinking. Their attitude of “We’ve always done it that way” prevents forward motion. That is why it is imperative to challenge the status quo.

Companies need a new set of sustainability metrics that challenge everything, including areas such as employee satisfaction, charity contribution, staff churn levels and mental health, and carbon reduction progress. These are all new things to nurture and value as part of a drive towards good growth.

# GOING CIRCULAR

At the heart of a lot of sustainability thinking is the recognition that we need to embrace a more circular way of thinking. The circular economy model is inspired by natural living systems and promotes the fact that there is no such thing as waste in nature. Unlike the traditional linear approach of take–make–use–waste, a circular economy is a sustainable closed-loop model (Figure 11).

It creates value through product recapture and then recycling, restoring and reusing product elements in remanufacturing – thereby radically limiting the extraction of raw materials at the beginning of a product’s life and the production of waste at the end. In essence, it involves keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. The concept is driving new trends in repurposing items, easy home repair and second-hand purchasing.

The circular economy concept also challenges the necessity of owning products in the way that we are traditionally used to doing.

It is access to what the product provides that is important, rather than the product itself. Understanding this shift in mindset lays the groundwork for shifting our economy from linear to circular and can be seen in many examples today, from car-sharing clubs to fashion rental.

Intelligent modern businesses are asking whether their customers can rent or lease their products instead of buying them outright – with the business keeping the same level of income or profit. This moves away from the built-in obsolescence seen often in products today (particularly tech), which is designed to encourage regular new purchases rather than lifetime use.

## What does this mean for marketers?

- Consumption and waste is a massive part of the sustainability challenge and marketers are inherently part of this problem. However marketers are ideally placed to influence change by persuading people to change their behaviour.
- Research by [The World Economic Forum](#) estimates that the transition to a circular economy could generate \$4.5 trillion in additional economic output by 2030.
- Being able to unlock this additional value will be dependent on an innovative, pioneering approach.
- Marketers will need to rethink how their customers interact with them and create a new paradigm of increased acquisition and retention.



**Other interconnected concepts include:**

**Biomimicry:** Emulating the models, systems and elements of nature to solve complex human problems.

**Cradle to cradle:** A sustainable business strategy that mimics the regenerative cycle of nature in which waste is reused. Building on the cradle to grave approach of decreasing waste, cradle to cradle goes a step further and attempts to eliminate waste altogether.

**Frugal innovation:** The process of reducing the complexity and cost of goods

and their production. It usually refers to removing nonessential features from goods such as cars or mobile phones to sell them in developing countries.

**The Inertia principle:** A guiding principle of the circular economy, as introduced by Walter Stahel: “Do not repair what is not broken, do not remanufacture something that can be repaired, do not recycle a product that can be remanufactured. Replace or treat only the smallest possible part in order to maintain the existing economic value.”

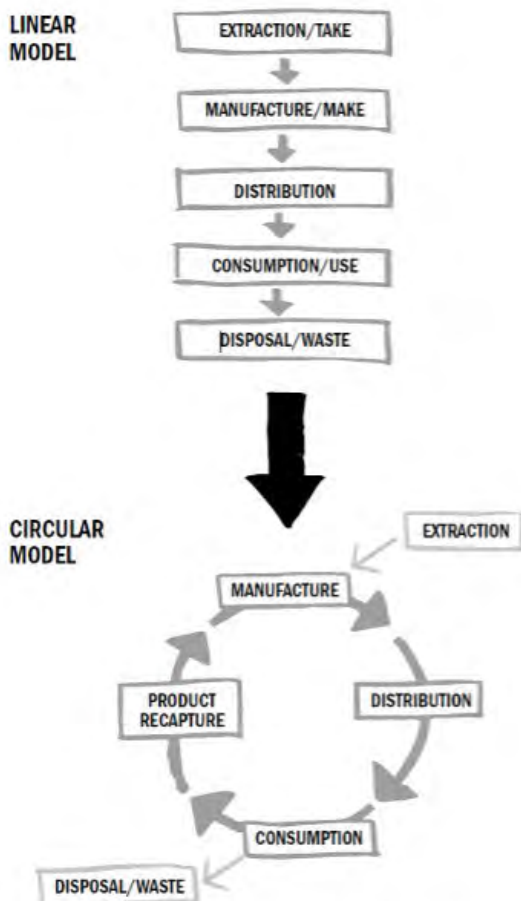


FIGURE 11 - From Linear to Circular <sup>1</sup>

Understanding the true complexity of all products is important in order to find ways of reducing their negative impact. A Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) is a way of calculating the overall impact that a certain product has on the environment throughout its life. This is often highly complex, as there are many steps in producing even the simplest items. Starting with the extraction of raw materials like metals and rock from the ground, chemicals from plants, wood from trees, and glass from sand. These raw materials then need to be transported to a place where they are made (or manufactured) into parts and put together to create the final product.

When the product is made, it needs to be distributed for sale (either directly to the customer or via a wholesaler or third party). Additional resources may be needed to repair or return items. And ultimately, to dispose of it when it is no longer working or needed (its end of life).

All these stages have an impact on the environment, and all of them use energy. To properly understand the impact of your product, a Life Cycle Analysis will help you plot every step.

<sup>1</sup> *The Sustainable Business Book: Building a resilient modern business in six steps* by Kevin Duncan & Sarah Duncan



# WHAT IS B CORP?

The B Corp movement is “unified by one common goal: transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities and the planet.” The B Corp sustainability credential was launched in 2006 by the non-profit network [B Lab](#), with “the mission to enable people to use business as a force for good”. The popularity of the credential has burgeoned with over 6,000 businesses in 80 countries receiving the prestigious certification so far.

Spanning across over 150 industries, a B Corp certification signifies that a business meets the highest standards of “social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency. A B Corp certification is the gold standard for businesses who wish to demonstrate a sustainable mindset.

## What is required to achieve a B Corp Certification?

Organisations that apply must prove they meet B Corp’s high standards to successfully attain certification. In order to achieve this, companies must provide “verified performance, accountability and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials.”

- Complete the B Impact Assessment (BIA) to measure and verify social and environmental performance
- Work towards achieving over 80 points. It’s rare to achieve this score when taking the assessment for the first time
- Complete the B Corp legal requirement by amending your governing documents
- Submit your application for review

## Why is it important to be a sustainable business?

According to research by [Arabesque.com](#):

**88%**

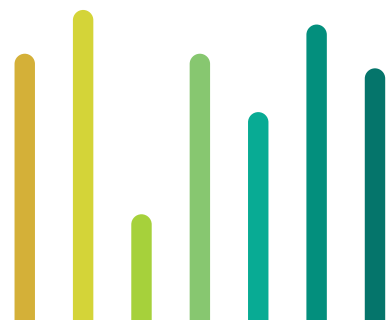
of reviewed sources find that companies with robust sustainability practices demonstrate **better operational performance**

**80%**

of the reviewed studies demonstrate that prudent sustainability practices have a **positive influence on investment performance**

**81%**

of CEOs believe that the sustainability reputation of their company is **important in consumers’ purchasing decision**



### How does it help your businesses and marketers?

An internal perspective for an organisation, the process and gaining certification means an organisation can:

- Better understand itself and its purpose.
- Identify where it needs to improve.
- Understand how it truly serves its stakeholders.
- Increase the ability to recruit and more importantly retain staff.
- You will be able to articulate clearly and succinctly, what society can expect from your organisation.
- Work towards benefitting the three pillars of sustainability; people, planet and profit.

### Where to start

B Corp Certification is designed to help you and your business to:

#### • Find a starting point

Learn which of the UN's seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are most relevant to your business, understand your existing contribution, and find out how to you can act.

#### • A clearer understanding

Analyse your operations, policies, and business models to discover the potential positive impact and

risks these pose in relation to the SDGs. You'll then be able to convey your learning journey and the impact improvement actions you are taking to your consumers.

#### • Set goals and track your improvement

A dashboard helps you to both visualise and comprehend your progress as you work towards your goals.

#### • See how you compare

The benchmarking feature is designed for you to compare your organisation against other businesses in your industry.

### What does it mean from a consumers point-of-view?

Once a business is certified:

- Consumers can clearly see that a business matches their ethics from the B Corp logo on your business's products, services and website.
- From an external perspective, being a B Corp comes with positive reputational benefits and can be used as a competitive advantage.
- Can help alleviate concerns about "greenwashing".
- However, it is important to note that whenever you use sustainability in a competitive advantage situation, it's not with the sole objective of "selling more" and driving profit.

### Who's made a success of becoming a B Corp?

Tony's Chocolonely announced their highest B Corp score of 125 points in May 2022, priding themselves on "living the B Corp mantra of balancing purpose and profit since day one". Affirming that "Being a B Corp helps us raise the bar by showing us where and how we can keep improving" and publishing annual reports on their website detailing where they spend their money, how the business is run and their performance.

Sustainable toilet paper producer, Who Gives a Crap, sells an eco-friendly toilet paper and other products, with a mission to donate 50% of their profits to help build toilets and "ensure everyone has access to safe water".

Launching in 2012, they currently have an impact score of 125.5. A number that has steadily increased since becoming a registered B Corp in 2016. In the 2020 financial year, they donated \$5.85 million, an increase of 750% compared to the previous year.

B Corp is not only about planet and profit, but people. Their score on Glassdoor by employees, past and present, is currently 4.7 stars out of 5, 92% would recommend them as an employer and 100% approve of the CEO. One review declares, "Working for a B Corp is super rewarding", so it's clear that this focus is striking a chord with employees.



# BEST IN CLASS

## LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

### BEST-IN-CLASS EXAMPLE 1:

*Putting sustainability at the heart of our further education*

With younger generations becoming increasingly aware of the sustainability issues we face as a society, it's crucial for educational institutions to act responsibly and demonstrate their work to minimise their impact on the planet. Loughborough University is doing just that- by weaving sustainability into the heart of its purpose, it's a key example of a place of higher education paving the way for a greener future.

At a strategic level, policies and commitments have been put in place to ensure everyday practices across the university are sustainable. These include:

- **A building excellence strategy**- a process enabling the institution to run a green campus, with buildings working to be as sustainable as possible.
- **An environmental management system** - a tool that aims to reduce the impact of the university's operations on the environment. It encourages the allocation of resources, assignment of responsibility, and ongoing evaluation of practices, procedures and processes with a view to continually improve the system.

- **A campus-wide energy strategy** - a development framework has been put in place to cover the university campus for a thirty-year period from 2020-2050.

As well as these overarching macro commitments and strategies, the university has implemented a number of smaller-scale changes to improve sustainability at a grassroots level. For example, it has installed a "Fruit Route"- a unique project and art installation made up of over 150 trees providing a habitat for people and wildlife alike, as well as a location for cultural activities and outdoor learning. In 2013 the campus also welcomed its very own honey bees. This was done with the aim of reducing the declining population whilst increasing pollination and biodiversity in the area- with the added bonus of being able to produce "Loughborough Gold" honey.

Crucially, a key driver of Loughborough University's approach to sustainability is that they have not become complacent. Students are able to run projects on campus to keep adding sustainable features- ensuring the technology is constantly improving and growing towards greener alternatives. The institution's previous sustainability strategy has recently come to an end, but with a new Vice-Chancellor and an even more ambitious and fresh strategy in the pipeline, Loughborough University is set to provide some more exciting changes in years to come.

## INNOCENT UK

### BEST-IN-CLASS EXAMPLE 2:

---

When it comes to saving the planet, there are a few brands who are leading the way – and innocent has been breaking ground since 1999. Since they were established, innocent have always been clear about their brand purpose, which has evolved over the years to meet the changing needs of the environment. As it stands, their purpose is to:

*“Make natural, delicious food and drink that helps people and the planet live well and die old.”*

Although, it is a truth universally acknowledged that everybody makes mistakes and, in trying, innocent have made one or two. In 2021, innocent were accused of “greenwashing” by the ASA because of an advert entitled Little Drinks, Big Dreams. The advert involved a guitar-playing singing otter who seemed to claim that by drinking Innocent smoothies they could “fix up the planet.” Although this was an innocuous claim, the backlash over plastics meant that the ad had to be deleted and Innocent released a statement to apologise.

However, this is just another reason why innocent are a cut above the rest. They were able to recognise when they made a mistake and have since learnt from it by working with the ASA to ensure it doesn’t happen again. Their ability to speak to their consumers in a human way and with authenticity and transparency is what makes their brand so recognisable and successful.

Their missteps do not tarnish their reputation. Innocent have always tried to reduce the environmental impact of their products as much as they can. They were among the first to use

recycled plastics back in 2003, they also champion sustainable farming and have created a truly circular economy for their packaging.

After COP26, the importance of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees could not have been stressed enough. Innocent are currently working to build their very own carbon neutral factory, which will eventually reduce the amount of carbon in every drink they produce. They are also on track to being completely carbon neutral by 2024 and net zero by 2040.

In 2018, innocent were proud to become a B Corp, which is a movement of businesses that believe in balancing purpose and profit, and who strive to use business as a force for good. It is a requirement that all B Corps continue to meet the high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency. Innocent are on a mission to prove that business can be done differently.

To ensure that they stay true to their purpose and their B Corp values, innocent have internally appointed their own “B keepers”, who come from departments across the business and each have their own responsibilities to keep everyone in check.

Emilie Stephenson, head of force for good at innocent, believes that “Sustainability may be green but it’s never black or white.”

There are a huge number of ways that businesses can save the planet, whether through carbon literacy training, reducing their digital footprint, using recycled materials for their products and packaging or becoming a B Corp. But no brand’s journey will look the same, and as Innocent proves, there will be challenges along the way, but your success will be measured by how you face them and move forward.







## LUCKY SAINT

### BEST-IN-CLASS EXAMPLE 3:

Persuading Brits to drink more responsibly is no easy feat, but for alcohol-free beer brand Lucky Saint, product and purpose aligned to create something delicious and good for the planet, which is now available in thousands of pubs across the UK. In 2020, Lucky Saint were able to offer their drinkers a “proper pint” and launched on draft. Their taps are now installed in over 400 of those pubs.

Lucky Saint began in 2018 when founder Luke decided it was time to stop feeling ashamed about ordering an alcohol-free drink when going out to the pub. Luke believed that the greatest reward of drinking isn't in the alcohol, but in the social connection, and although 0% beer wasn't hard to come by, great tasting 0% beer was rare.

In the UK especially, socialising and drinking are so deeply intertwined that it's hard to have one without the other, so it hasn't always been smooth sailing for the start-up. Back when the brand was new, they attended a craft beer festival in Manchester and literally had people laugh in their faces when they tried to offer alcohol-free beer to the crowd. Three years on, Lucky Saint are able to see the change in people's attitudes and this is proven in their popularity and success.

Lucky Saint is not only well known for being alcohol-free, but also for being purpose-led, and the brand is well on its way to becoming B Corp certified. Since its inception, Lucky Saint have been very clear about their company purpose, their values, and their ambitions which are:

- Purpose: Inspire the world to drink better.
- Ambition: Be the world's defining alcohol free brand.
- Values: Be Generous. Stay Humble. Get Lucky.

It was important to Lucky Saint that they were able to establish their purpose and values from such an early stage in their journey, so they could ensure that their product, marketing and company culture aligned with them thereafter.

Making sure that sustainability is second nature is a central pillar of Lucky Saint's strategy, and becoming B Corp certified is just one step along the way. From their internal culture, to the way their products are packaged, they strive to place people and planet on the same level as profit.

In September 2022, Lucky Saint moved their bottle e-commerce boxes to 100 per cent recycled cardboard. They are also transparent with the amount of CO2 they produce and partnered with Earthly to help remove some of their carbon emissions and become climate positive.

As well as being entirely committed to their product, the team at Lucky Saint are also committed to their purpose and their pledge to help save the planet. The team have vowed to take their eco pledges home and make an extra effort by cycling into work and not buying new in 2022. This is part of their effort to overall decrease their contribution to climate change.

It is clear that Lucky Saint is another business leading the way in the fight to make the world a better and healthier place. Their virtuous product aligns with their positive company culture, the work they have done to decrease their carbon emissions and their commitment to B Corp Certification which they are expecting to receive any day now.

# SUSTAINABILITY IN CAREERS



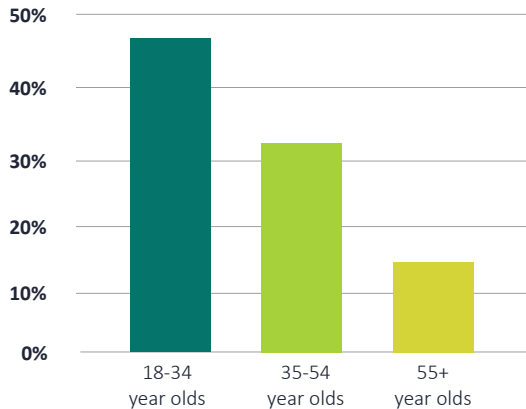
As we become more focused on sustainability as a society, jobseekers are starting to pay more attention to a company's sustainability efforts. In fact, we find that nearly half (48%) of adults would be more willing to work for a company that they know has strong sustainability credentials.

It's clear from our research that adults also expect their current employers to be doing more when it comes to sustainability. Nearly half (48%) would like their employer to be more transparent about the impact their business has

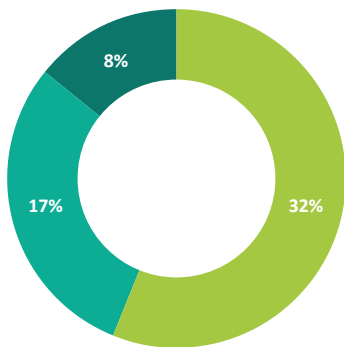
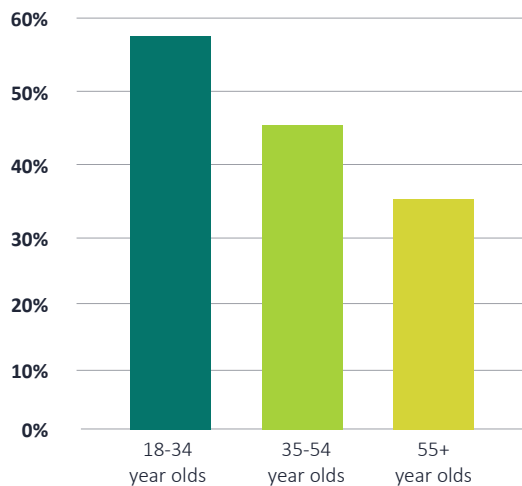
on the environment, while only a third (32%) say they are proud of their company's current sustainability credentials.

There is therefore a real opportunity for businesses to increase internal and external communications to demonstrate their sustainability efforts, talking openly about the journey ahead and the challenges they may face on the way. In doing this, businesses can not only retain top talent, but attract new talent too.

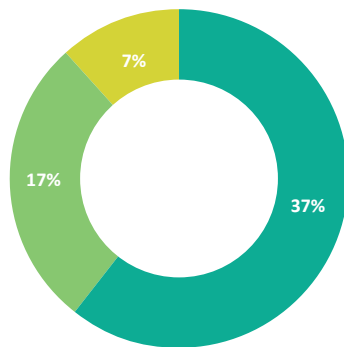
**Percentage of those who will actively seek out industries which do not have a harmful impact on the planet the next time they look for a job:**



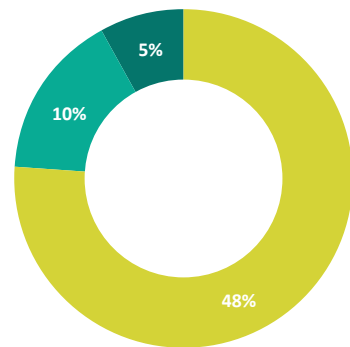
**Percentage of those who would be more willing to work for a company that has strong sustainability credentials:**



- UK adults who are proud of their company/ employer's sustainability credentials
- Are not proud
- Don't know



- UK adults who wish their employer worked harder to be more sustainable
- Do not
- Don't know



- UK adults who would like their employer to be transparent about the impact its products/ services' have on the environment'
- Do not
- Don't know

# ADDRESSING THE SUSTAINABILITY SKILLS GAP

## CIM'S SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION HUB

For more information on sustainable marketing and how marketers can drive sustainability across the business visit the CIM [Sustainable Transformation Hub](#) for the latest research.



### Qualifications

CIM offers a range of sustainability focused qualifications to provide marketers with the skills and insight needed to incorporate sustainability into their roles and business strategies.

The CIM [Level 6 Diploma in Sustainable Marketing](#) enables marketing managers to expand their knowledge and support a business in responding to sustainability challenges.

The CIM [Marketing Leadership Programme and Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Marketing](#) (available outside of the UK) provide experienced marketers with strategic direction allowing them to develop and implement sustainable strategies to drive positive business change.

### Training courses

CIM offers a wide range of training courses to help marketers keep up to date with the latest trends in sustainability including:

#### **Fundamentals of Sustainable Marketing**

A new online course from CIM which enables marketers to get started on their journey to becoming a sustainable marketer.

#### **Sustainable Marketing Strategy**

This course enables marketers to ensure that sustainability is embedded within business strategy.

#### **Carbon Literacy for Marketers**

This course, accredited by The Carbon Literacy Trust, enables you to certify as a Carbon Literate citizen.

#### **Sustainable Brand Strategy**

Learn how to ethically manage a brand strategy and develop a moral advantage.

#### **The Sustainable Marketer**

This course provides a broad understanding of the sustainable landscape, and how to take the lead in driving sustainable marketing.

**Strategic Marketing Planning for 2024** Explore how the role of brands and their relationship with consumers has changed and understand how you can futureproof your marketing strategy.



# MARKETING'S ABILITY TO DRIVE CHANGE

“

Every marketer should remind themselves that their job is not just about driving click-throughs or marketing a product. They are in a unique position to influence social change, mediating the relationship between brands and their customers. They should act as a catalyst for positive change and have an important role to play in making sure that brands have sustainability high up on the priority list.

*- Gemma Butler, former CIM marketing director and co-founder of Can Marketing Save the Planet*

”

“

An online poll of almost 2,000 people we ran found that 71 per cent of respondents feel that marketing now plays a significant role when it comes to driving sustainability initiatives, and an overwhelming 97 per cent think marketing has the power to drive through change.

The good news is that marketers are already, to an extent, influencing businesses to put sustainability at the heart of discussions. Seven in ten (71%) marketers feel they have a voice within their company or with their clients when it comes to sustainability, demonstrating the positive impact they could have within businesses when armed with the right skills.

In a list of marketing activities ranging from raising awareness of sustainable business activity to sustainability reporting-educating themselves on sustainability and climate change was the most common priority for marketers, with nearly a quarter (23%) saying it was a focus for the next twelve months.

Whilst our research uncovers a sustainability marketing skills gap in the industry, it's encouraging to see that marketers are aware of their shortcomings and willing to take the necessary steps to understand the more practical and technical aspects of sustainability. Prioritising training will no doubt lay the foundations for more successful sustainable marketing campaigns, and ultimately drive change.

*- James Delves, head of PR, content and community, CIM*

”





# TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

---

## 1. EDUCATE YOURSELF

Read up on the latest developments in sustainability by subscribing to relevant newsletters from publications such as Edie.net, Sustainability Magazine and BusinessGreen. These media outlets also regularly host webinars and events where you can engage directly with industry experts. Make sure you are also clear on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement and the outcomes of COP27. They will all be central to businesses' and governments' sustainability efforts in the coming years.

## 2. SET TARGETS

Any ambition needs clear targets, but it is especially important when looking at a strictly regulated area like sustainability. No matter how big or small your organisation or clients are, everyone can make a difference through making more sustainable choices. Make sure to also factor in a review period at the end of the timeline to encourage discussions in the business on how to improve for the future and to reflect on learnings.

## 3. KEEP UP TO DATE WITH REGULATIONS

This will help to ensure you are confident of the guidelines you need to work within. Communicating to colleagues regulatory changes can also provide valuable insights to the wider business and prevent situations arising which could damage brand reputation, trust and put your organisation at risk of having ads banned or potential fines.

## 4. TRAINING IS KEY

Set aside a budget and time for the marketing team to undergo relevant training externally, or host a training afternoon internally where people from other areas such as internal comms can also join. Sustainability is the biggest challenge humanity is facing and one of the most talked about subjects in business. This fast moving subject needs to be prioritised and a focus at every level.

## 5. UNDERSTAND YOUR COLLEAGUES AND BOOST ENGAGEMENT

Talk about it, make sustainability part of your everyday conversation (a social norm), take the lead as marketing and work with your HR department in an effort to understand what matters to your employees, what they are passionate about and how they can participate when it comes to sustainability. Following this, establish an internal sustainability action group with colleagues from all levels to ensure there is buy in for sustainability efforts from the top down. This group can lead sustainability initiatives for the company internally, such as recycling, newsletters sharing sustainability news, and town hall meetings, ensuring everyone is involved.



# CONCLUSION

---

As a society, we can no longer say that we're not aware of the scale and challenges of climate change. The UN secretary general, António Guterres, said of [The Synthesis Report](#) released on 20 March 2023: "This report is a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every time frame. Our world needs climate action on all fronts: everything, everywhere, all at once."<sup>1</sup>

We must recognise the critical role our industry can play. Our ability to inform and educate not only enables us to raise awareness of sustainability issues to mass audiences, but importantly our positioning provides a unique, direct link between the C-suite and consumers.

As we've demonstrated throughout this report, positive steps have already been taken- with many marketers already working on sustainability campaigns, and others showing an interest in securing the relevant training to be more effective in their role. However, we appreciate that there is still hesitancy and fear of wrongdoing within the industry.

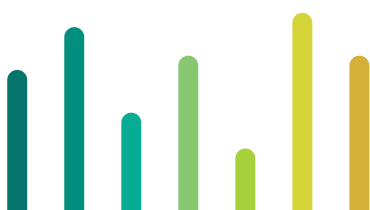
CIM's recommendations have been developed to provide support and guidance for the 49 per cent of marketers who say they are wary of working on sustainability marketing campaigns due to the fear of "greenwashing".

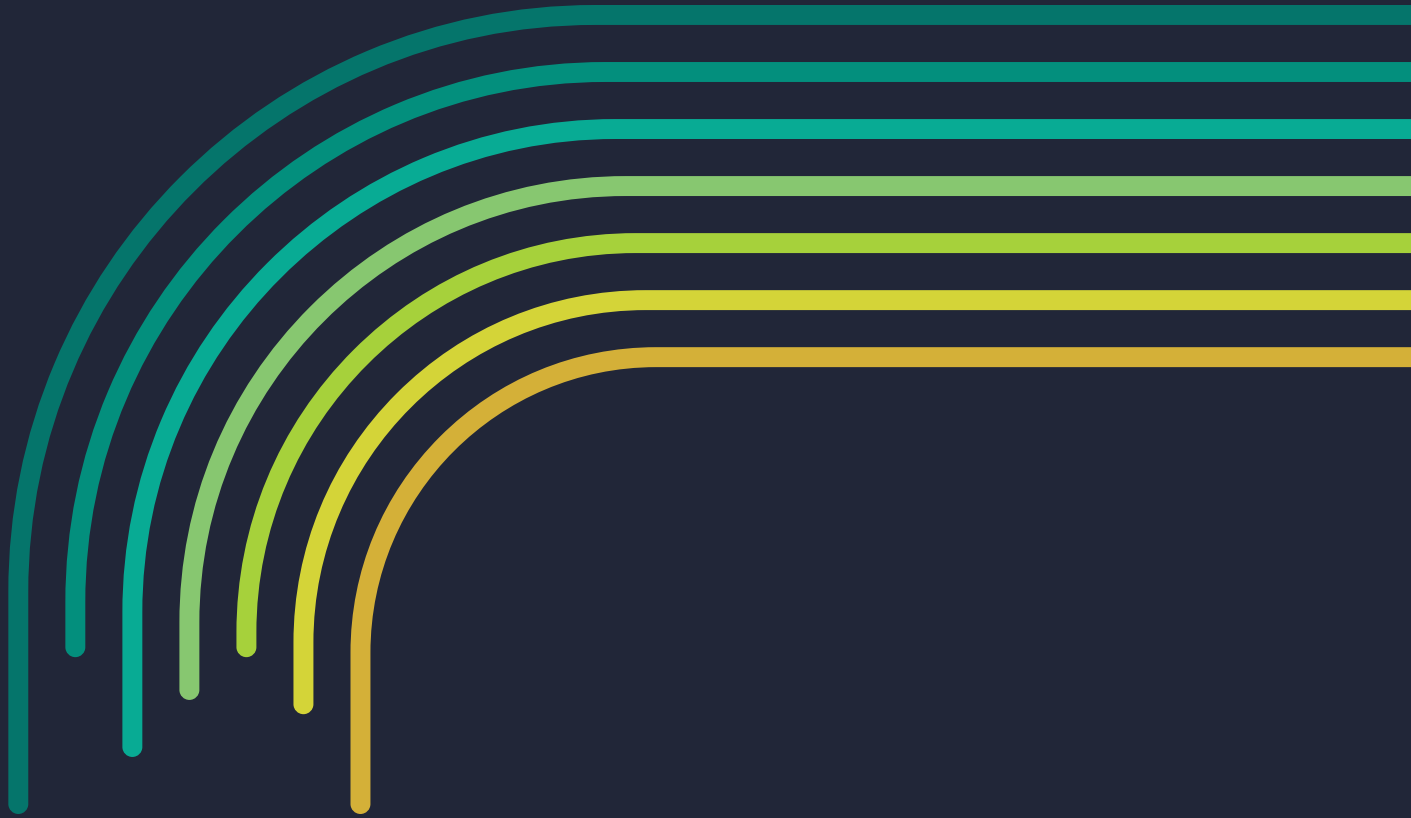
Our recommendations aim to help marketers feel confident in increasing their businesses' communications around sustainability efforts, and addressing consumer demand to see more action from companies on sustainability.

Climate change is complex, and the road ahead will be challenging. Marketers will have to learn, adapt and evolve within an ever-changing landscape but at CIM, we are confident that the talented individuals of the marketing sector will drive and support greener business models that give consumers the power to make more sustainable choices.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>








# THE SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING SKILLS GAP REPORT

CIM  
Moor Hall  
Cookham  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
SL6 9QH  
United Kingdom

Call: 01628 427250  
Visit: [cim.co.uk/content-hub/thought-leadership](https://cim.co.uk/content-hub/thought-leadership)  
Email: [editorial@cim.co.uk](mailto:editorial@cim.co.uk)

 [facebook.com/theCIM](https://facebook.com/theCIM)  
 [@CIM\\_Marketing](https://twitter.com/CIM_Marketing)  
 [CIM | The Chartered Institute of Marketing](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cim)

Authored by:  
Chris Daly, James Delves, Bryndley Walker & Opinium

© CIM 2023. All rights reserved.

Permission to reproduce or extract material from this publication must be sought from CIM.