



“neutral”

The Drive to Carbon Neutrality

Ireland recently pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050 to coincide with announcements by major carbon-heavy operators like Delta and FedEx to become carbon neutral as well. My favourite initiative, Brewdog's carbon negative beer club (which I can totally get on board with), demonstrates a brands' sustainability message moving from purpose to impact. Less saying more doing! As the recent Percil advertisement stated quite rightly, you can't solve it in the comments section.

The term “sustainability”, with which a plethora of things are placed under, has evolved from external corporate philanthropy to internal corporate responsibility and now it is regarded as corporate action. It was business plus sustainability, now it is business that is sustainable. There are many reasons for this shift but most importantly is the growth of eco-responsible consumers.

We now have an active consumer base. In the GenZ nation, 76% are concerned about humanity's impact on the world, 77% say doing good should be a central part of doing business and 77% say working for a company that helps the world is as important as salary. Never has this generation been better summed up than “Every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want,” Anna Lappé. Nothing drives policy faster than the demands of the end consumer.

Businesses have already started to react to the changing consumer. Covid, rather than distracting has led to an increase in how businesses are communicating their value. 76% are now talking about how they are helpful in the “new normal” while 73% inform consumers about their efforts to face the situation. The future is now. 1 in 5 are now considered eco-consumers meaning these sustainability practices drive consideration and for businesses, this means profit figures.

Brands' reaction to the consumer demand is a sense of self-realisation that inside them lies the problem and the solution. P&G, L'Oreal, Danone, Unilever and Microsoft are just some of the carbon-neutral advocates not to mention some carbon positive hopeful brands like IKEA and Starbucks. “Don't jump on bandwagons & virtue signalling. You must get serious about DOing vs SAYing – walk ahead of the talk, because real impact is critical to build licence, legitimacy, authority over years.” – Alan Jope, Unilever CEO.

Because these policies take years to plan and bring to fruition, every brand or company should be analysing what their plan is now otherwise you will end up being the odd one out when society looks to this as the new standard. The last time something like this occurred was the digital revolution that left huge operations like Blockbuster and Kodak behind. Consumers moved on and left those who didn't move with them in the past.

Don't be one of those brands.

Just a thought.

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Sources: Mediacom, Fuse, Fast Company, Forbes, Ogilvy Consulting.

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