COMMUNICATION IN SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

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Abstract : *Consumer facing Transparency is a function of communication that has become essential for the fashion business ecosystem and to have the reputations of legitimacy and credibility. As a contemporary subject, it is surrounded with ambiguity and heterogeneity in definitions, different Fashion brands/fashion brands/retailers/Fashion brands/retailers try to have their own definition and approach towards transparency. The communication strategy and disclosure of information therefore varies within these companies. With the increase in ecommerce, corporate Websites are currently the largest medium of sustainability communication. Fashion brands/fashion brands/retailers/Fashion brands/retailers use a combination of visual communication, data, text, reports and design to communicate the sustainability of their supply chain. There is however, a need to be able to measure the level of transparency of such communication against a standardized model. A model that Fashion brands/fashion brands/retailers/Fashion brands/retailers can adopt to assess the transparency in their communication. There is growing information about sustainability and growing consumer awareness about these issues, but none of these are readily translating into action. In this paper we look at why the information provided to consumers on sustainability issues and their solutions are not sufficiently actionable and propose an alternative method of communicating product-related sustainability information to consumers.*

Keywords : *Fashion Instrument, Consumer decision making, Sustainable consumer behavior, Eco-labels*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is an issue of fundamental importance for all national and local authorities. Most experts agree that our current rate of development is not sustainable. In fact, some suggest that, unless significant action is taken, we will need two worlds' worth of resources to support us by 2050. Sustainability, beyond the popularity of the word itself is a business strategy. Companies and organizations can benefit by mapping the objectives of their sustainability strategy with the expectations of the stakeholders mainly investors and customers. Although a top line plans this approach has a healthy influence on the bottom-line growth of the company**.** Sustainability communication is an approach to engage your customers and investors to showcase your progress on sustainability commitments. It is understood to have a positive influence on the shareholder value when you showcase how you drive business value with ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) & sustainability. Sustainability communication effectively engages investors, customers or employees as the key stakeholders, and aligns well with the

company's overall strategic objectives as defined by the sustainability action plan. Any action plan should define the role of communication in sustainability development. A thorough sustainability communication strategy is mandatory to have the desired benefits both non-material and material. Sustainability communication strategy, like any other strategy, must start with a data driven understanding of an audience and the stakeholders. It is imperative that map out the motivations with messages that resonates. The right mix of communication channels can then accelerate the delivery of these messages and forward.

OBJECTIVES

1. Administration can change priorities for communication
2. Communications can provide expert advice, from strategy development to creative work
3. Communications capacity can be built from other sources

METHODOLOGY

The paper is solely based on secondary data. The different sources of data are journal articles, websites, e-books, reports of various organization and commission, articles published in international, national and local papers etc. This paper will give a brief description of the Importance of Communication in Sustainability and Sustainable Strategies.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNICATION IN EMPLOYER BRANDING

An entire generation is demanding solutions from politics and business to slow down climate change. Environmentally conscious behavior and actions will not just be limited to the personal daily routine of individuals, but will also become a fundamental issue in all aspects of day-to-day life. As a result, high expectations are placed on companies, forcing employers to adapt to the needs of young talent if they want their brand to last in the long run. The focus of younger employees is therefore less on having a high salary or climbing the career ladder, but more on wanting to bring about lasting change through their work. A work-life balance, working from home, flexible working hours, and a good team are the optimal prerequisites they need to fulfil this calling and support their company in a motivated and innovative way. However, sustainability should not just be feigned, it needs to be put into practice throughout the company and ingrained in the employer's basic principles. Not only will that make the company more attractive as a potential employer, but will also boost the performance of employees because they identify with their employer and thus act with an eye to the future.

Sustainability communication must be credible

"Actions speak louder than words" that is the consensus among the generation that values a sustainable corporate culture. If a company's green marketing is not credible, it risks being accused of brand greenwashing and the repercussions of the resulting violation of trust will be strongly felt. With that in mind, sustainability communication is all about acting sustainably and consistently pursuing an ethical and environmentally friendly strategy to market the brand authentically. In this context, corporate social responsibility (CSR) the specific contribution that a company makes to sustainable business is not exactly new, but it has received a lot more attention in recent years. The values of society have changed and consequently so have the

expectations that young people have of brands. Companies therefore need to be aware of the essential aspects of successful sustainability communication:

Authenticity

The Internet makes it possible for anyone to verify any claims you make at any time. Consumers and future employees trust companies when what they communicate is reflected in tangible results. That is the only way to maintain the desired public image.

Willingness to engage

The importance of social media in marketing communication cannot be denied. Interaction with the end consumer is a factor that strengthens brand trust. Authenticity is also vital here to make potential customers willing to engage. However, communication on social media platforms can be challenging and should be approached with a clever strategy. In this regard, sustainability communication is not just limited to one side of the coin: critical questions, remarks, and discussions should be expected, which means a certain loss of control on the company's side. Then again, a brand will be questioned and discussed on social media anyway, so it is wise to make yourself present and proactively participate in the discourse. Ultimately, that presents an opportunity for you to expand your company's scope of action.

Companies shaped their sustainability communication

A holistic view of the complex issue of sustainability is essential for successful sustainability communication. For companies across all industries, that means that the suitable processes overlap in many places, but the various business sectors still have different focuses which, in a way, is reflected in their communication in this area. The following companies serve as good case studies for sustainable business and how it is communicated.

- ❖ Beiersdorf AG is the parent company of well-known skincare brands that all have one thing in common: an end-to-end sustainable supply chain. The necessary measures for achieving this are broken down in detail for consumers.
- ❖ Patagonia produces textile and outdoor clothing and has promoted sustainability and environmental protection ever since it started out. Its website gives customers insight into the production and supply chain and lets them gain a picture of the environmental impact and social background.
- ❖ Ben & Jerry's not only uses sustainable, fair-trade ingredients in its ice cream, but also contributes to society by employing disadvantaged people in its production facilities.

Credible sustainability communication

Sustainability communication does not mean presenting the entirety of individual measures in a good light. For a brand to appear authentic and credible, a company needs a sustainability strategy that comes from within. Sustainable and ethical practices must be deeply rooted in the company's structures and form part of its DNA as an internal attitude. This is the only approach that will ensure its credibility as a potential employer and enable effective employer branding.

Web Based Sustainability Communication and Reporting

The chapter focusses on describing the role of company websites in communication and what transparency of sustainability communication mean in an

online environment. Many scholars like have argued that internet has become as key medium for organizations to communicate information and that the stakeholders are increasingly turning towards company websites to access information. Scharl, emphasizes on the importance of presentation, navigation and quality of the website to effectively communicate. They should be developed in a way so that they are useful and useable. The design, content, structure and navigation should support findability and support users. Professionals agree that successful websites are: accessible, appealing, consistent, unified in design, simple, navigable, safe to use, easy to learn, easy to remember how to use.

Sustainability Communication

Reports such as annual reports, CSR report are a common tool used for disclosure. Many companies assume that transparency and reporting are same thing; however, it is important to understand that transparency is not same as reporting. Reporting is just one of the ways to partly communicate transparency, there are more ways to be transparent and there is more to transparency then what's being reporting. Assurance statements may also be used a tool to reduce information asymmetries and enhance reliability. However, such statement should be backed up by data and 3rd party attestation so that the potential benefits of such statements is not countered and the quality of assurance doesn't diminish.

Structure & Quality of Information

The Clarity of purpose of the website and content at entry points such as homepage. Pages such as home page are used for branding, image building and are like a first impression to the users. It is this page where users decide whether to spend more time on the website, to explore more pages or not to. Users find it more appropriate to have summary information on the main pages with expansion into the subject through offering a link to pages containing more detailed information about the subject. The content (text and graphics) of the website should be relevant, it should be comprehensible for the people it is meant for. The important parts of contents should be stressed. reported that an introductory level of language is appreciated by the users as it enables the novice user to understand the problems. Following some other aspects that contribute to the quality of information structure and content.

❖ The speed and ease of searching information.
❖ Grasp ability of structure of information and signalling by visual cue's
❖ Consistency of the content

Trusting online information

For sustainability information to be trust worthy there are number of factors that promote trust. mentions "common ground" as valuable in trusting online information and it includes: knowledge that participants have in common and shared experience and norms. In addition, it is important to provide the source of data and information to establish credibility. Such information should also be accompanied by authors name so that the users know that someone is accountable for putting the information, there should be a provision to contact them.

Role of Website Design in Transparency of Communication

The presence of large amount of information on websites have led to the complexity of information structures. The term "website design" here refers to visual

design, navigation, information structure. Therefore, the view that web design is communication design is vital to present the information in a simpler form. The website for any given Fashion Brand/Retailer is representative of their sustainability communication strategy and the design process itself is a deliberate set of decisions which has to be in line with the communication strategy. The process determines the "usefulness" of the website which is whether the users understand the information, find it credible. From communication point of view the designers have to consider.

- How to prevent consumers from the wealth of information being provided
- How do consumers find the information?
- How to integrate multi modes of presentation such (text, images and video) in one coherent document.

The visitors will not be able to learn from content if they are unable to find it, if design elements are distracting and if the individual pages don't highlight the crucial information. The sustainability policy therefore must be accessible and visible.

CONCLUSION

In public discourses, the meaning of sustainability as alternative to capitalism, and thus, as revolution and challenge in terms of asking for a different human-nature relationship and ecocultural identities has not yet made it to common sense, mainly because of the mentioned overuse and trivialization of the term sustainability. At the start of the year, the beginning of the ostensibly 'roaring 20ies', people called for letting this be the decade when we save the world. However, things turned out very differently though still 'roaring'. With the COVID-19 pandemic, political as well as corporate activities for sustainable development and transformation have ground to a halt; society's attention is now focused on public health and the mitigation of major economic, social and cultural consequences. The government aims to consolidate efforts with existing partners, and to include at least one new firm per year. New initiatives, such as workshops on sustainable development for employees, are also being considered. It is hoped that these will add to the long-term impact of the campaign, by encouraging real people to communicate with customers about sustainability, rather than only relying on printed material.

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