



## **Supporting Members Starting Out On Sustainability**

### **Article Eight – Tell Your Business’ Sustainability Story**

With more and more organisations and consumers practicing ‘conscious consumerism’ as they consider the sustainability practices that businesses have implemented before they do business with you or buy your products or services, it’s important that you are able to tell your business’ sustainability story.

#### **Why Tell Your Story?**

- to build trust in you and your brand
- people expect businesses to be environmentally aware in all their advertising and communications
- brands with a strong brand purpose grow brand value at a faster rate
- to attract good staff
- to appeal to suppliers
- to grow sales

#### **When Telling Your Story:**

It’s important to identify what outcomes you want from your messaging, so when you have decided what they are, there are some key points to consider to help you develop your story:

- write for your audience
- keep it simple
- keep it relevant and succinct
- avoid jargon
- limit the use of the word sustainability
- be yourself / authentic
- be passionate – inspire people
- be specific

also, consider:

- using carefully chosen visuals – a picture paints a thousand words
- using infographics rather than lots of text
- the timing - is there a key sustainability event that you can leverage from?

**Greenwashing:** – is when an organisation makes itself out to be more environmentally friendly than it really is, which is illegal and could result in fines and damage to your brand and reputation. To ensure that you’re not guilty of greenwashing avoid:

- misleading wording
- misleading imagery
- misleading information

*"If you make environmental claims, they must be accurate, scientifically sound and substantiated". Commerce Commission*

## **Crisis Management:**

Unfortunately, things don't always go according to plan so if you do make a mistake, whether it be in your business processes or your communications, you need to be able to deal with the situation effectively and efficiently. Damage limitation will be crucial so you should:

- own it – don't blame others or make excuses
- tell the truth
- tell the whole truth
- tell it now

If you are interested in looking further into this topic here are some useful resources to assist you:

Commerce Commission: [Environmental Claims Guide](#)

Consumer NZ: [Greenwashing: Can we trust environmental claims?](#) (A quick read regarding businesses and greenwashing)

GoWell Consulting: [The Language of Sustainability - provides a definition of the most common terms and when to use them](#) (Downloadable resource)

Adapted from Sustainable Business Network – Tell Your Business' Sustainability Story