

WARC
AN ASCENTIAL COMPANY

Key Takeaways

The Case for Sustainability in Tourism Marketing

By Ashik Ashokan, Head of Advisory, APAC

Make it WARC. Make it Effective

Understand the purchase considerations of eco-conscious travellers



Staying in hotels which actively work to conserve energy and water use



Eating in restaurants which use local produce



Taking public transport



Buying locally made souvenirs

So one of the first things we can do as marketers is to understand the purchase considerations of these new breed of travellers.

Redesign your customer journey according to the key considerations...



WARC

Unify your communications around sustainability: Many brands, even established ones, make a mistake of being incoherent across their sustainability messaging. What is available on online touchpoints is not communicated on the offline touchpoints. Ensure that you have a singular brand platform around the topic of sustainability: this can involve key copywriting, brand assets, or a sustainability logo. Make sure that all your communication touchpoints are unified and speak in the same language (not literally.)

Think about your CX from an online and offline lens: O2O marketing was a huge topic a couple of years ago and then it fell through the cracks. It is now revived most pandemic as many customers rely on a combination of online and offline touchpoints to make their decisions. Ensure there are smooth transitions between an offline and online experience for the customer. If you have a physical pamphlet for an experience you are offering or for your hotel room, ensure there is a digital version of the same asset or there is some form of connection between the both.

Use a feedback loop: Sustainability communications has picked up in a huge trajectory only after the pandemic, most brands are still figuring their rite of passage. It is okay to make mistakes (not tone deaf ones) and it is crucial to bounce back and iterate accordingly to fit the norms and expectations of consumers.

Cross check against the five foundations of sustainability communications



Clear
Ambitions



Substantiated
Claims



Compelling
Messages



Transparent
Communication



Accessible
Information

These five foundations are the holy grail of sustainability communications

The Seven Sins of Greenwashing



WARC

The Seven Sins of Greenwashing:

1. Hidden Trade-Offs

There are many ways to label a product to make it sound very eco-friendly. Claims like 'made with recycled contents' or 'compostable' are sometimes emphasized and used to cover up other environmentally damaging factors the company commits when creating the product. Even though something can be recycled, environmental costs of unethical working conditions, high emissions and solid waste production, overexploitation of resources, or high resource consumption are often swept under the rug.

2. No Proof

Many companies self-proclaim themselves as environmentally friendly even though they have no factual proof of what they claim. You may see this on products claiming to be made with certain amounts of recycled materials or specific amounts of emissions being reduced but do not have

the certification to prove what they are saying. These empty claims can be very damaging to the environment as it allows big companies to get around environmental laws.

3. Vagueness

You can find countless labels throughout stores claiming they are 'all natural' or 'sustainable.' What does that even mean? These labels are misleading because the right combination of environment-related words can easily persuade the general public into thinking they are supporting a company that really cares about the environment.

4. Irrelevance

This occurs when a company promotes an environmental claim that is technically true but irrelevant to the product. The most common example of this is the claim of "CFC-Free." Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are a type of man-made greenhouse gas primarily produced within air conditioning units. However, CFCs have been banned by law since the 1970s. The claim "CFC-Free" tricks people who are unaware of current environmental laws or production standards to believe that the company is actually environmentally conscious.

5. Lesser of Two Evils

It is common for companies to make environmental claims even when the overall product has little to no environmental benefits, to begin with. For example, the automobile industry is a massive contributor to greenhouse gases and global CO₂ emissions. Some car companies claim that their cars require "greener" fuel or that their cars are "more fuel-efficient" when in reality, owning a car is one of the worst things you can do for the planet. No matter how green the fuel is, the car will still produce large amounts of greenhouse gases.

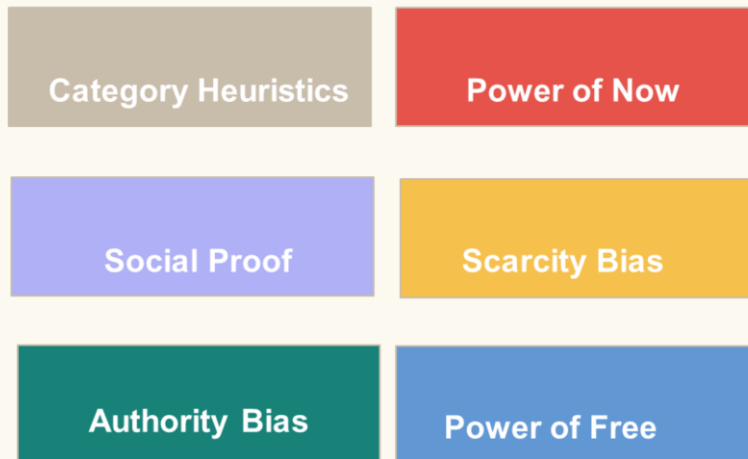
6. Fibbing

Many companies get away with claims or labels that are straight-up, not true. An example of this includes claims of cars emitting zero carbon dioxide emissions into the air. As ridiculous as this may sound, countless companies are still getting away with lying to their customers – and their customers fall for it every time.

7. Worshipping False Labels

The average person sometimes can't tell the difference between an actual environmental certification and a fake one. This creates a very misleading claim for the customer as the company is taking advantage of and buying its way out of following actual environmental laws and standards. Another example of this is when companies put pictures of trees or use green colour for the label but don't change the product's contents. Many people take for granted that all it takes for something to be environmentally friendly is to have the words 'eco' written in green letters.

Leverage Behavioral Science Principles



WARC

Google and The Behavioural Architects set out to study how consumers choose to buy one product over another in an online environment of “abundant choice” and “limitless information”.

The study was underpinned by **six** key biases identified by behavioural science as influencing purchase decisions:

Category heuristics - key product specs that simplify decisions

Power of Now - the longer you wait, the weaker the proposition becomes

Social proof - the power of others' recommendations

Scarcity bias - as availability decreases, desire increases

Authority bias - trust and expertise can sway decisions

Power of free - a free, even unrelated, gift with a purchase is a motivator

Key Takeaways

Macro trends around eco consciousness have a real impact on your brand and business

Shape your consumer journey according to emerging purchase considerations and incorporate sustainability marketing

Keep the five foundations of sustainability communications as a cross checking tool

Avoid greenwashing at all costs. Remember "Acts not Ads".

Understand the shift to stakeholder capitalism to make a case for sustainability in your organisation

Thank you

Ashik Ashokan
Head of Advisory, APAC
ashik.ashokan@warc.com

Make it WARC. Make it Effective

WARC