



EARTHCHECK

Sustainability Storytelling for tourism and hospitality operators

How to tell your sustainability
story without greenwashing



About the guide

The Sustainability Storytelling Guide for Tourism And Hospitality Operators is a simple guide that will help you and your team tell impactful sustainability stories about your business without falling into the trap of 'greenwashing'.

It's a basic framework that covers four steps:



Audiences



Ambitions



Actions



Amplification

There are templates and case studies to help you through, and by the end you should be able to:

- Identify your **key audiences**
- Know what to say about your sustainability **ambitions** and **actions**
- Create a simple plan to **amplify** sustainability stories to a broader audience without greenwashing

What is sustainable tourism?

Sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Sustainability is a journey, not a singular activity. Progress towards sustainable outcomes can be achieved in all visitor economy businesses.

What is regenerative tourism?

Regenerative tourism is a step beyond sustainable tourism. It's a process whereby tourism sector stakeholders exert care and guardianship for the improvement and enhancement of natural, human and human-made elements when operating in a destination, ultimately creating a net gain and enabling these elements to exceed their current survivability conditions.

[Learn more about regenerative tourism.](#)

What is greenwashing?

'Greenwashing' refers to misleading, exaggerated or unsubstantiated environmental claims made by businesses, in an attempt to create a false impression of their environmental impacts or benefits.

In 2020, the European Commission found that 53.3% of the 150 environmental claims they examined were vague, misleading or unfounded, and 40% were unsubstantiated.

Greenwashing can cause serious reputational damage to your business, and in many jurisdictions it now comes with legal repercussions – see 'From greenwashing to greenhushing: What to avoid' on page 15.



Before you begin ...

If your business is committed to sustainability, and communicating it in the right way, then before you get started it is important to have the right systems in place to deliver outcomes.

To get you started, reflect on if you have in place, or if you need to develop:

- **A sustainability policy or commitment** – an outward-facing document that lets your staff, suppliers and potential guests know that you are committed to sustainable action.
- **An understanding of your carbon footprint** – you can't manage what you don't measure. This helps you to understand where your business impact is and what you can do to address it.
- **A sustainability action plan** – you know and understand what your impact is, so what are the actions you will take to enhance the positive and reduce the negative?

Once the fundamentals are in place, you can add sustainability into your communications plan, sharing your success and challenges as you go. That's where this guide can help.

We'll walk you through how to communicate your ambitions and actions with different audiences to maximise your impact and competitive advantage. Sustainability is a journey, so talk about the path that you are taking and the reason why it's important to your business.

Remember, it is important that you have the evidence in place to back up your claims so measurement becomes an integral part of your sustainability journey.

Contents



Audiences

05

Your audiences and what they need from you.

In this section we'll discuss:

Internal staff

- How to get their buy-in and engagement
- Training, policy and walking the talk

Visitors and customers

- Why they care about sustainability
- How they make decisions
- The customer journey, from dreaming to sharing

Industry

- Connecting effectively with your Destination Management Organisation (DMO)
 - Supply chain and bookings channels
 - What are the storytelling opportunities?
-



Ambitions

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Communicating your business's sustainability ambitions.

In this section we'll discuss:

- Your SMART sustainability objectives
 - Articulating your business's vision for sustainability
 - Extracting a messaging and storytelling plan from your ambitions
 - What are the storytelling opportunities
-



Actions

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Communicating your business's sustainability actions.

In this section we'll discuss:

- Measuring progress
 - Evaluating sustainability stories for authenticity and impact
 - From greenwashing to greenhushing: What to avoid
 - Transparency, data, and honesty on your business's progress
-



Amplify

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Crafting and curating sustainability stories from your destination.

In this section we'll discuss:

- Telling transparent, authentic stories
- Enabling a culture of storytelling in your business
- The narratives, content formats and amplification tactics you can use to help get stories heard
- Community management - how to make it all fit together
- Case studies to inspire your business

Audiences

If you want your storytelling to be impactful, you need to work with and reach three specific audiences:

- Your staff
- Industry and partners
- Your customers

Each audience enables storytelling and advocacy with the next, and combining all three gives your sustainability communications a strong foundation to grow, be more trustworthy and stand out from the crowd.



📍 Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train

Your team

Your team and staff are the frontline in delivering the customer experience. Getting their buy-in is crucial to deliver on your promise

If you engage them in the “why” behind your sustainability ambitions and actions, they can become passionate advocates for your business and be the authentic voice behind your storytelling.

Sustainability also creates meaning in their role, increasing engagement, retention and performance.

GET THEIR BUY-IN

Engagement starts with a shared understanding about the importance of sustainability to the business. Use this checklist to run a meeting or workshop.

- Articulate why sustainability matters from a business, financial and regulatory perspective.
- Explain how it aligns with the values and mission of your business - having a sustainability policy for your company helps. See section 2 for a template.
- Show how sustainability can contribute to the overall success of the business (for example, how it attracts higher value customers or that it differentiates you from competitors, or how it preserves your assets for multi-generational use and monetisation).
- Ask your team members how working in a sustainable business helps their professional and personal growth.

ACTIVITY: BREAK INTO GROUPS AND ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- What are our SMART sustainability ambitions? (See section 2 for more on this)
- What actions are we taking?
- How do we hold ourselves accountable?
- What stories can we tell?

PROVIDE TRAINING AND POLICIES - WALK THE TALK

If you haven't already, you'll need to adopt policies that align with your sustainability goals and then incorporate these into everyday business practices. They don't need to be complex – they just need to align to your business and be embedded in everyday practices.

Provide training to ensure they understand these policies and are equipped to implement them effectively. You can even make this part of your initial buy-in workshop. Your team may not have engaged with sustainable management practices before, so laying a foundation and providing them a base level of understanding will support your aspirations.

Consider online learning tools to support your team, [such as Typsy](#).

Leadership plays a key role in promoting sustainability. Managers and executives should lead by example, following sustainability policies in their actions and decision-making. An authentic commitment to sustainability inspires employees to follow suit.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STORYTELLING

- Launch your sustainability storytelling through your workshop
 - » Tell your network through LinkedIn or email about your workshop, what was said and why
 - » Take photos or video of your team participating in the workshop, or sharing why sustainability is important in their role for owned and social channels such as LinkedIn, Instagram and eDMs
- Invite a guest speaker from your Destination Management Organisation (DMO) at national, state, regional or local level to talk about how sustainable tourism fits into the wider narrative of the region – and how they can help promote your business.



Industry

Building a sustainable tourism industry requires collaboration. By connecting effectively with your Destination Management Organisation (DMO), supply chain, other operators within your destination and booking channels, you can amplify your sustainability message.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR DMO

Your DMO can be a powerful ally in promoting your sustainability efforts. Regularly communicate your sustainability initiatives to your DMO. Collaborate on marketing efforts to reach a larger audience and drive impact.

Something to note: Involving them in your comms planning early is good. But when you do create your stories and content, ensuring it is visible and usable for them is important. Look at their marketing channels and align your content with theirs.

SUPPLY CHAIN AND BOOKING CHANNELS

Every interaction in your supply chain and booking channels is an opportunity to communicate your commitment to sustainability. Choose partners who share your sustainability values and collaborate on initiatives to enhance your collective impact. This is where you can showcase any sustainability certifications you may have.

Other questions they may ask and will be important to have answers to are:

- Do you have a sustainability policy?
- What are your per person (or equivalent) emissions?
- What action is your business taking to reduce emissions?

OTHER OPERATORS

You cannot deliver a sustainable experience alone. Talking to and creating links with other like-minded operators will drive greater engagement and also offers a network of support for you to share opportunities and challenges with.

Visitors and customers

Your customers care about the environmental and social impacts of their choices. More than three-quarters of people want to make their holiday travel sustainable*.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS TO CUSTOMERS

Consumers are more aware of the environmental and societal impacts of their actions. They value businesses that are mindful of their carbon footprint and contribute positively to society. By communicating your commitment to sustainability, you can align with your customers' values and deepen their connection to your business.

It's important to note that while a customer may not make their booking choice because of sustainability alone, ensuring they know about your sustainability credentials as they do their research can be the difference between a new loyal customer and revenue left on the table.

Use the simple customer journey map on page 8 to ensure your sustainability messaging is present throughout their decision-making process.

* [Booking.com's 2023 Sustainable Travel Report](#).

1. <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/travel/discover/get-inspired/Global-Travel-Trends>
2. https://www.expediagroup.com/who-we-are/Impact--Sustainability/default.aspx#module-tabs_item--first

Customer Journey



1. Dreaming

At the dreaming stage, potential customers are just beginning to consider their options. Use this stage to communicate the potential positive impact of choosing your sustainable business.

ACTIONS:

- Ensure your DMO includes your sustainability features in their destination marketing – think imagery and video.
- Use your sustainability messaging in your paid ads or social media – this could be as simple as free bike rental or the herb garden that your kitchen uses.
- Ensure your certification badges (if you have them) are displayed prominently in any third-party listings.



2. Planning

As customers plan their trip, provide detailed information about your sustainable practices and how they enhance the customer experience.

ACTIONS:

- Ensure your certification badges (if you have them) are displayed prominently on your website and any booking aggregators.
- Include sustainability storytelling on your website. It could be a whole section about your ambitions and actions, a category featuring sustainable experiences, or a video showing your water recycling or solar energy initiatives. Make it easy to find so that potential guests can engage.



3. Booking

As your customers book, give them confidence that the purchase choice they have just made is a sustainable one.

ACTIONS:

- Display your certification badges (if you have them) on booking confirmations or any other purchase communications.
- Use storytelling in your booking communications to show how your travel experience operates. Show your ambitions and actions, such as how the property saves water, or generates electricity, or how local communities are supported by their purchase.



4. Experiencing

During the trip, ensure your sustainable practices are visible and contribute positively to their experience.

ACTIONS:

- Ensure your certification badges (if you have them) are displayed prominently on promotional materials (that are preferably digital or use recycled materials), vehicles and customer facing areas.
- Ensure staff have been trained and understand your sustainability policies well – they can be the source of impactful sustainability storytelling for your customers.
- Use sustainability wayfinding – a sign next to water fountains that say how much water you save each year; signage that shows your power saving initiatives.



5. Sharing

After the trip, encourage customers to share their experiences. Their stories can serve as powerful testimonials to your commitment to sustainability.

ACTIONS:

- Stay in touch with customers through semi-regular email marketing.
- Run loyalty competitions that encourage sharing of sustainability stories.
- Build your audience personas - A detailed guide to understanding the needs, preferences, and values of your internal staff, customers, and industry partners. [Use this template to tailor your sustainability communication to each audience.](#)

Ambitions

Sustainability initiatives start with ambitions.

It's a great place to begin because while your sustainability initiatives can take months or even years to come to fruition, you can articulate what you want to do, and why it matters.

But remember: Ambition is nothing without action. So avoid talking about

ambitions that aren't realistic or achievable.

Break down the ambitions you can talk about by making the SMART objectives. That way, you can be specific about the stories you share about each initiative. You could make this an activity in your staff buy-in workshop.



Crystalbrook Byron, New South Wales, Australia



SMART Sustainability Objectives

To make your sustainability ambitions actionable, it's important to set objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART).

Specific:

Your objectives should clearly define what you want to achieve. This will ensure everyone in your organisation understands the goal and can contribute to achieving it.

Measurable:

Your objectives should include specific criteria that can be used to measure progress. This will help you track your progress and make necessary adjustments.

Achievable

While your objectives should be ambitious, they should also be achievable. Setting unrealistic goals can demotivate your team and undermine your efforts.

Relevant

Your objectives should align with your overall business goals and mission. This ensures that your sustainability efforts contribute to the success of your business.

Timely

Your objectives should have a specific timeline. But don't rush. Sustainability is a journey and you don't have to do everything all at once. Pick a focus for a time frame and deliver real outcomes.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

Our business will aim to produce 50% of its own energy by December 2026

Articulating your business's vision for sustainability

Once you've set your SMART objectives and your ambitions are clear, you need to wrap them up with one overarching statement.

This statement should be inspiring, clear, and aligned with your brand values.

Consider what you want your business to look like in the future.

- How does it interact with the environment and the community?
- What value does it bring to customers, employees, and other stakeholders?

Use these answers to craft a compelling statement that encapsulates your sustainability ambitions.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

"At Crystalbrook Collection Hotels and Resorts we aspire to protect the environment and create sustainable experiences that enhance, rather than compromise the guest experience. We enjoy modern living through attitude, design, technology and a passion for a better world – or what we call #ResponsibleLuxury."

Create a storytelling plan

With your overarching sustainability statement and SMART objectives spelling out what you can talk about, now you can get to work adding sustainability into your communications calendar.

DEVELOP STORY IDEAS:

Every sustainability objective can be transformed into one or many stories. Consider the journey towards each objective: the challenges, successes, impacts, and learnings. Use data (water saved, recycling figures, solar panels installed, jobs created) and translate them into great stories.

These elements can be woven together into a compelling narrative that brings your sustainability ambitions to life. Get your team, your partners and customers involved.

"How our water initiative saved the equivalent of 4 million beer cans in one year"

MAKE A CONTENT CALENDAR:

Determine when, where, and how you will communicate your messages and stories. This should be guided by your understanding of your audience and how you normally reach them.

CONTENT CALENDAR EXAMPLE

Date	Topics	Audiences	Channels	Images/Video Required
1 August	Introduction to Daintree Tours	First-time visitors	Website, Instagram	Promotional video of the Daintree tours
4 August	Highlight: Unique Flora and Fauna	Nature lovers	Blog, Facebook	Images of rare plants and wildlife
7 August	Tips for Visiting the Daintree	Potential visitors	Newsletter, Twitter	Infographic with tips
12 August	Spotlight: Indigenous Cultural Experience	Culture enthusiasts	Instagram, YouTube	Video interview with Indigenous guide
17 August	Daintree Rainforest Sustainability Practices	Nature lovers	Blog, Pinterest	Images showcasing sustainable practices
22 August	Customer Testimonials and Stories	Potential visitors	Facebook, TripAdvisor	Video montage of happy tourists' experiences
28 August	Hidden Gems of the Daintree	Adventure seekers	Instagram, Blog	Photos of lesser-known spots



Storytelling opportunities

Your sustainability ambitions present numerous storytelling opportunities.

Each objective is a journey, each action is a step forward, and each achievement is a success story. Sharing these stories can inspire action among others, build credibility, and strengthen your brand.

For example, if one of your objectives is to reduce water consumption, share stories about the changes you've made, the challenges you've faced, and the impact you've seen. This could include stories about installing water-saving devices, training staff to be more water-conscious, or partnering with a local water conservation organisation.

Remember, your sustainability stories should not only highlight your successes but also your ongoing efforts and commitment to continuous improvement. This honesty and transparency will build trust with your audience and demonstrate your genuine commitment to sustainability.

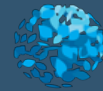
Example signage

On average we save **6,736 litres** of water a **day**.

We love to make a splash.



This sign is printed on recyclable materials



EARTH CHECK



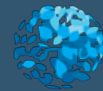
gold | convention and
coast | exhibition centre

Got that Gold Coast energy? Us too.

We've managed to **reduce our power use** by a **third** in the **past five years**.



This sign is printed on recyclable materials



EARTH CHECK



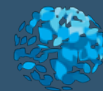
gold | convention and
coast | exhibition centre

We **treat water** on site and use it as **irrigation** on our gardens and lawns.

Note to self: Stop and smell the sustainable flowers.



This sign is printed on recyclable materials



EARTH CHECK



gold | convention and
coast | exhibition centre

Actions

Now you've turned your ambitions into actions, it's time to evaluate your progress and use it to tell stories that further your business's sustainability initiatives.



📍 One&Only Gorilla's Nest, Rwanda



Measuring Progress

Accurate measurement of your sustainability actions is key to credible communication.

It enables you to track your progress against your objectives, identify areas for improvement and report on your victories.

To measure progress, establish clear metrics for each of your SMART objectives – they should provide a clear picture of your progress. Regularly reviewing and reporting on these metrics can form the basis of your ongoing sustainability storytelling, and ensure transparency and accountability.

Don't be scared to celebrate wins, or to share progress on initiatives that haven't quite hit the mark. Your transparency makes you trustworthy.

EXAMPLE GRAPHIC



Evaluating sustainability stories for authenticity and impact

Now we're at the pointy end of your storytelling – putting your money where your mouth is.

Here, authenticity is vital. Your stories should reflect your real-world actions and impacts. Avoid exaggeration or misleading information. Instead, focus on genuine efforts and achievements, including the small ones.

Use this checklist to tell if your stories have:

- Accurate and specific claims
- Quantifiable metrics
- Transparency
- Third-party verification
- Educating and engaging content
- Avoided greenwashing language
- Encouraged feedback

To evaluate the marketing impact of your stories, consider how they resonate with your audience.

- Do they inspire action?
- Do they deepen understanding of sustainability?
- Do they reinforce your brand's commitment to sustainability?

Use audience feedback and engagement metrics to assess the impact of your stories and adjust your approach as needed.



From greenwashing to greenhushing: What to avoid

Legislation is being introduced around the world to stop greenwashing.

For instance, the European Commission recently introduced the Green Claims Directive, which states that environmental claims may only be made if they meet minimum criteria and are independently verified by a third party assessment body.

Under the Directive, terms such as 'environmentally friendly', 'natural', 'biodegradable', 'climate neutral' and 'eco' cannot be used without evidence. Carbon offsetting schemes, which have often been used to justify labeling products and services as 'carbon neutral', cannot be used to substantiate the claims.

In the US, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is weighing major changes to its Green Guides, a set of standards for companies making environmental claims. The Green Guides are non-binding, but are often cited in class action litigation when companies are accused of greenwashing. The changes would clarify when deceptive marketing around sustainability and environmental responsibility violates federal law.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has also released its own draft guidelines on making solid sustainability claims.

These laws and guidelines seek to protect consumers and the environment, and support genuinely sustainable businesses that can verify their claims.

To maintain credibility and trust with your audience, and to avoid legal repercussions, it's crucial to avoid unethical communication practices, such as:

Greenwashing

Making unsubstantiated or misleading claims about the environmental benefits of a product, service or company.

Greencrowding

Promoting a small number of genuinely sustainable practices while ignoring other harmful practices.

Greenlighting

Presenting a company as environmentally friendly when its overall impact is negative.

Greenshifting

Shifting the focus to less harmful practices while continuing more harmful ones.

Greenlabelling

Using ambiguous or misleading labels to give the impression of environmental friendliness.

Greenrinsing

Diverting attention from negative environmental impacts through charitable donations or sponsorships.

At the same time, it's important to avoid 'greenhushing' – staying silent about genuine sustainability achievements, often due to fear of criticism for not doing enough.

Instead, strive for transparency, honesty, and continuous improvement in your sustainability journey.

Transparency, data, and honesty on your business's progress

Building trust with your audience involves embracing transparency, data, and honesty in your approach.

Be open about your sustainability goals, actions, and progress. Use data to substantiate your claims and provide a clear picture of your impact.

Be honest about the challenges you face and the mistakes you make. This not only demonstrates your commitment to learning and improvement, but it also makes your sustainability journey relatable and engaging for your audience.

Remember, sustainability is a journey, not a destination. The goal is not to be perfect, but to continuously strive for better.

Amplify

You've planned, prepped your team, engaged your partners, set your ambitions and learned how best to speak about sustainability. You've also hopefully started posting about these things on your owned and social accounts, and across your marketing assets.


Tell transparent and authentic stories

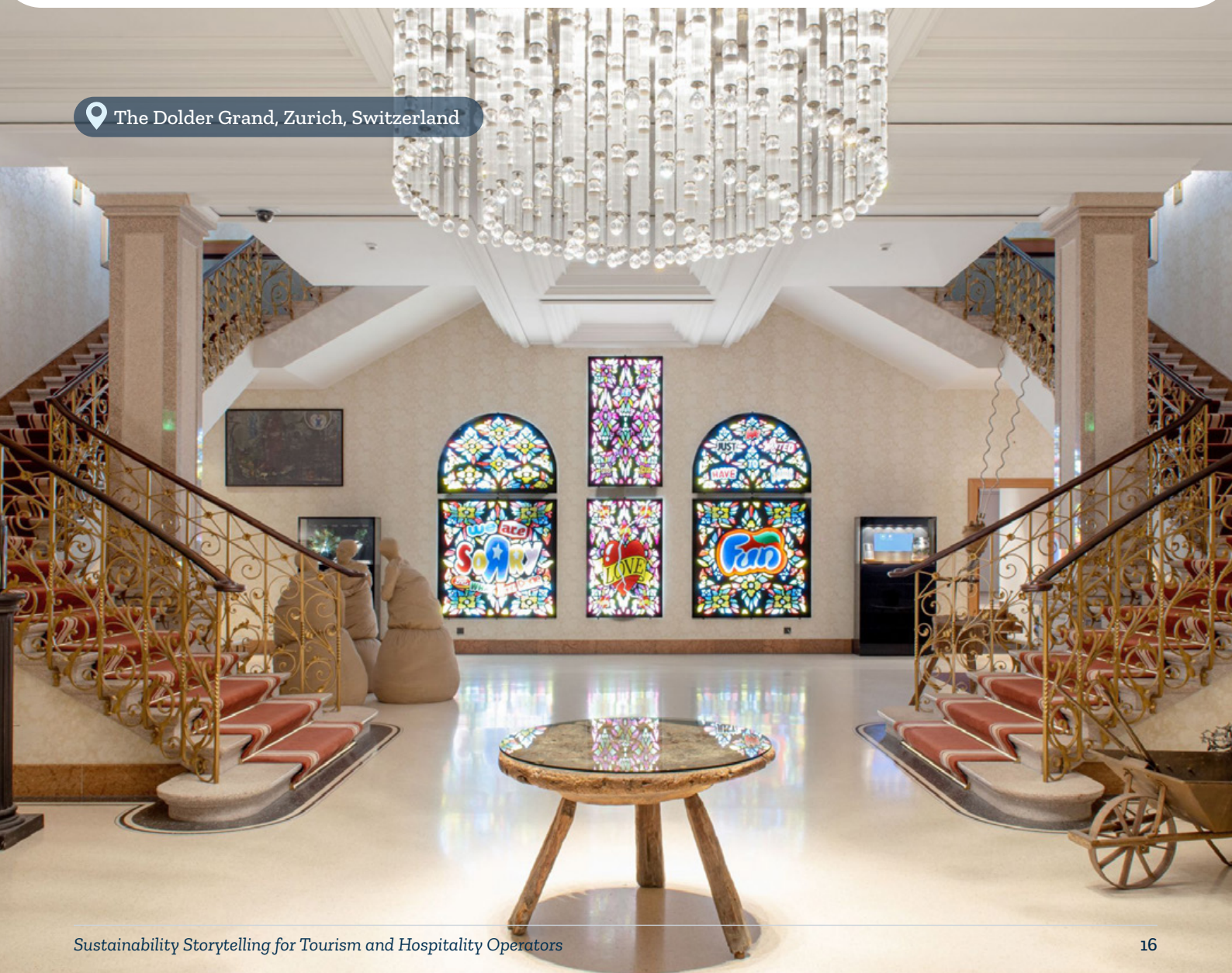
Authenticity and transparency are key to effective sustainability storytelling. Share stories that truly reflect your actions, progress, and impact. Be honest about

the challenges you face and the mistakes you make. This not only builds trust with your audience but also makes your stories more relatable and engaging.

Data is a great way to substantiate your stories and provide a clear picture of your impact. But remember, sustainability stories are not just about numbers. They're also about people, communities, and ecosystems. Balance your data with human stories to create a deep emotional connection with your audience.

Let's look at a case study from PoB Hotels.

 The Dolder Grand, Zurich, Switzerland





Gravetye Manor, Sussex, England

CASE STUDY:

PoB Hotels

How PoB Hotels authenticate their sustainability story

PoB Hotels is a collection of independent hotels across the British Isles – each one the Pride of Britain.

A recent survey conducted by the company found that 45% of its member hotels acknowledge that sustainability holds great importance for their guests, and 50% of its member hotels have identified sustainability initiatives as a top priority for the upcoming year.

In sharing their sustainability stories with guests, PoB member hotels will be seeking to highlight the work they're doing in critical areas such as community support, carbon footprint reduction, resource conservation, adherence to social responsibility principles, and ensuring long-term economic viability.

To ensure their sustainability journey is transparent, and their progress is verifiable, PoB Hotels have put their commitment

to sustainability on show by taking part in EarthCheck's science-backed certification program.

As part of the EarthCheck Certified program, EarthCheck's experts work with members to devise a Sustainability & Energy Efficiency Policy; implement a sustainability management system; and track the performance of key metrics like energy use, water use, carbon emissions, chemicals, community and employee impact, paper use and waste against qualitative benchmarks in real time.

The brand's performance is then verified by an independent auditor, enabling PoB Hotels to substantiate their claims when communicating with their members. The brand recently achieved EarthCheck Silver Certified status – proving their dedication to sustainable tourism and responsible travel.



Enabling a culture of storytelling in your business

Empowering your team to share your message, beyond the confines of key messages or advertisements, is absolutely crucial.

When your team is enabled to share your business's stories, authenticity shines through.

Encourage your team to share their own sustainability stories, whether they're about implementing a new sustainable practice, engaging with the local community, or learning something new about sustainability.

Creating a dedicated space for these stories, whether it's a section in your internal newsletter, a designated channel on your team communication platform, or a regular slot in team meetings, can help cultivate this culture. These stories can then be curated and shared with your wider audience, including your visitors, DMO and other like-minded operators. This approach provides a diverse and authentic picture of your sustainability journey.

The narratives, content formats, and amplification tactics

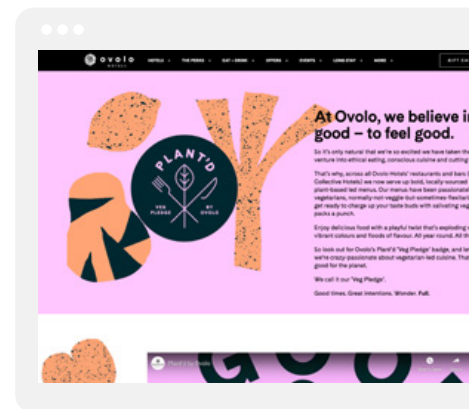
There are various narratives, content formats, and amplification tactics you can use to share your sustainability stories.

Narratives:

There are numerous ways to structure your sustainability stories. You can choose to focus on the journey – where you started, where you are now, and where you're headed. Alternatively, you may choose to emphasise the impact, showcasing the positive changes your actions are generating. Finally, you can also focus on the vision, sharing what you're striving for and why it matters.

Content Formats:

Different content formats can be used to tell your stories in engaging ways. Choose formats that best suit your story, your audience, and the platforms you're using. This might include:



Blog posts	Blog posts to deliver an in depth overview of key initiatives. Good for visitors. Suited to the dreaming phase.
Videos	Videos are an engaging, vibrant and personal way to share initiatives or updates. Good for visitors and DMO partners. Suited to dreaming and planning.
Infographics	Infographics are a strong way to communicate complex information about the actions and impact you have made. Good for trade and industry partners and visitors. Suited at the planning and booking stage.
Case studies	Case studies offer a more technical overview of your achievements. Good for DMO and industry partners.
Social media posts	Social media posts offer a quick insight into what you're doing. Good for visitors and DMOs in the dreaming phase.
Newsletters	Newsletters provide an opportunity to create a dedicated space for highlighting new initiatives and sharing what's important to your business.



Amplification Tactics:

There are multiple tactics you can use to amplify your stories. These might include employing SEO (search engine optimisation) to reach a broader audience through search; utilising social media marketing to engage your current followers and extend your reach; leveraging PR to secure media coverage; establishing content partnerships to access new audiences; implementing email marketing to engage your existing audience; and more.

Your DMO is an excellent source of amplification. They have existing audiences and connections that can help send your sustainability stories far and wide.

Online listings on third-party websites are another prime opportunity for sustainability storytelling.

Weaving an authentic sustainability narrative, whether it's around local produce use, action to reduce energy, water or waste, or even the certifications achieved, will ensure sustainability is front and centre in all your listings – creating a competitive advantage.

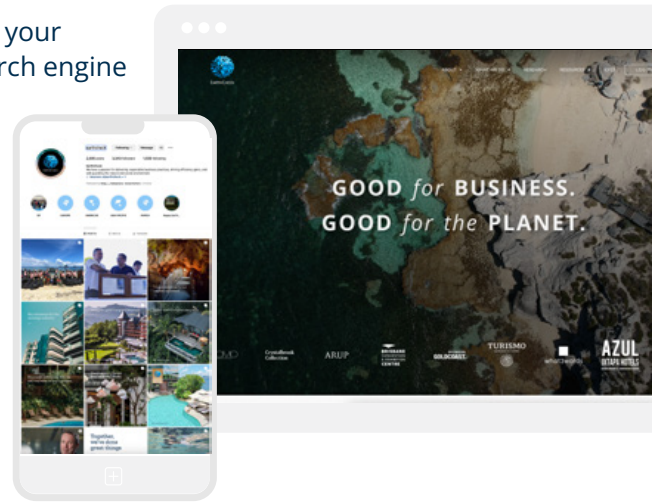
Community management and making it all fit together

Community management is about nurturing relationships with your audience. It involves listening to your audience, engaging in conversations, providing valuable content, and facilitating a sense of community.

In the context of sustainability communication, community management can help ensure your messages are well-received, your audience is engaged, and your efforts are amplified. Regularly share your sustainability stories with your community, invite feedback, answer questions, and encourage discussion. This two-way communication can help build a strong, engaged community that supports and amplifies your sustainability efforts.

Case studies included to inspire your business

The case studies included in this guide provide real-world examples of businesses that have effectively communicated their sustainability stories. They highlight different approaches, challenges, and successes, offering valuable insights and inspiration for your own sustainability communication.



CASE STUDY: SKYRAIL RAINFOREST CABLEWAY

Commit and communicate: How Skyrail showcases its sustainability ambitions and actions

Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is a unique visitor experience in Tropical North Queensland that allows visitors to glide for 7.5km above rainforest canopy between Smithfield Cairns and Kuranda.

The team at Skyrail is committed to delivering sustainable outcomes that benefit the unique rainforest landscape and the community in which they operate, and that bring economic benefits to the region.

Skyrail’s environmental and social sustainability policy is clearly articulated on their website.

“Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is a unique ecotourism attraction that seeks to provide its guests with the best rainforest experience available anywhere in the world. Skyrail is based in the heart of Australia’s World Heritage listed Tropical Rainforests, in Cairns, Australia.

“Skyrail is committed to the highest standards of environmental protection and embraces an ongoing review-and-improve philosophy in its business and operational practices.”

Skyrail proudly displays its EarthCheck and Ecotourism Certification on its website and onsite, backing up their claims with EarthCheck science and measurement.

Environmental and Social Sustainability

Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is a unique ecotourism attraction seeking to provide our guests with the very best rainforest experience available anywhere in the world. We are committed to the highest standards of environmental responsibility and management, and embrace ongoing reviews to improve the philosophy in our business and operational practices.

We are proud of what we do to protect and showcase the oldest tropical rainforest on Earth. We welcome hundreds and thousands of visitors each year without impacting our environment.

HOW ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?
Our Commitment
 Exceeding our obligations to protect the natural and cultural heritage values of the area in which we operate by complying with all legislation, licenses, permits and agreements, and maintaining an Environmental Management System in accordance with company standards in line with EarthCheck's practices.

What are we doing to reduce our impact?

- Using technology to reduce our use of paper based trip guides by creating the Skyrail Interpretive App and Audio Guide.
- Eliminating plastic straws from Canopy Cafe to support the [Strawless](#) plastic and plastic reduction movement.
- Hosting tree planting events in the local community; Tropical Tree Day is our version of Planet Ark's National Tree Day.
- Electric vehicle charge stations at our Smithfield Terminal so that guests can charge their electric vehicles while they explore the rainforest.
- Solar powered phone/device charge stations in our Canopy Cafe - made from recycled batteries and solar panels.
- The Skyrail Rangers compost coffee grounds from our Canopy Cafe and use them to reseed the gardens at our Smithfield Terminal.

Other ways we are reducing our impact

- Through the open plan design of our buildings, operates an energy management system controlling use of lighting and air conditioning, using low energy lighting and solar power to charge batteries on the gondolas.
- By collecting rainwater for use in toilet cisterns, using water efficient cisterns and low flow tap fittings, minimising landscaping requiring irrigation, and controlling irrigation for optimum benefit.
- By using biodegradable cleaning products, recycled paper products, recycling paper, cardboard, rubber, glass, plastic, aluminium, and other metals.
- Smarter travel through the energy efficiency of the cableway and by introducing and educating visitors about the environment and sustainability.
- By raising and distributing funds via the Skyrail Rainforest Foundation to support tropical rainforest research and education projects.

DEMONSTRATING OUR COMMITMENT
 Sustainability Initiatives

THE SKYRAIL SUSTAINABLES
 The Skyrail Sustainable: A team of staff, dedicated to promoting and implementing sustainability initiatives throughout our company.

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE
 Containers for Change: Funds raised are given to the Skyrail Rainforest Foundation for education and research. Scheme ID: C0574890

Our Awards

- Australia
 - 2009 Global Excellence in Sustainable Tourism
 - 2016 Global Excellence in Sustainable Tourism
 - 1998 Best Major Tourist Attraction
 - 1997 Best Major Tourist Attraction
 - 1998 Best Tourist Development Project
- Queensland
 - Tropical North Queensland
- International

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Grupo Xcaret, Quintana Roo, Mexico

CASE STUDY: GRUPO XCARET

How Xcaret celebrates Mexico's heritage and culture

For more than 30 years, Mexico's Grupo Xcaret has been building and operating popular parks, resorts and tours on a bedrock of sustainability.

The pioneering tourism operator's portfolio now includes seven parks, three luxury hotels and four archaeological tours, all dedicated to generating better environmental, social and economic conditions for the region, in accordance with the group's three pillars – people, planet and prosperity.

The group runs several conservation and environmental education programs, and incorporates natural landscapes and local history, cuisine, arts and crafts into its offerings, ensuring that Mexican traditions – a fusion of influences from Aztec, Mayan and other native cultures – are preserved and celebrated.

Nowhere is this demonstrated better than at Xcaret Park, in the heart of the Riviera Maya. Here, the Travesía Sagrada Maya (Sacred Mayan Crossing) – the pilgrimage of ancestral canoers who paddled to Cozumel Island to worship the goddess Ixcel – is faithfully recreated each year.



The annual rite brings Mexico's heritage to life for guests, who are given the opportunity to participate as canoers (a commitment that requires six months of training), or as visitors to the ceremony, farewelling and welcoming the canoers.

The group's properties, attractions and experiences are certified by EarthCheck, giving guests confidence that the local culture they're celebrating is being supported to survive and thrive.



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