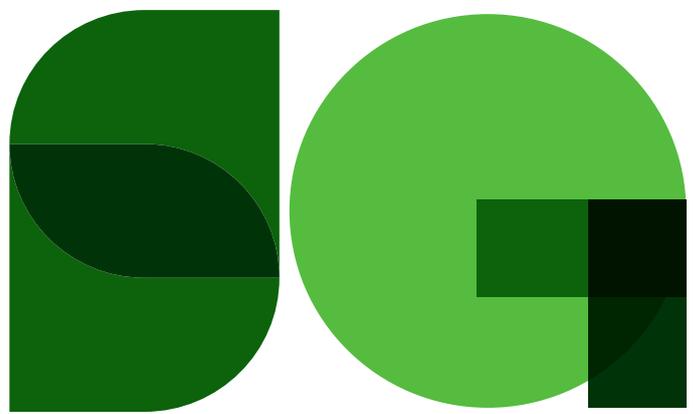


ESGPath



The Power of ESG Brand Design and Storytelling

Who cares?

Gone are the days when ESG was either something companies engaged in, or not. In the internet age, and with the significant impact that ESG has made on purchasing and investing decisions, the world is watching.



Millennials care

According to Nasdaq, Millennials are a driving factor in the growth behind ESG investments. About 76% of older millennials indicate that climate change poses a serious threat to society, according to a survey conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of CNBC Make It.



Consumers care

According to an April 2021 survey conducted by PwC, "While consumers have long said that they value sustainability, the COVID-19 crisis perceptibly shifted consumer behavior and enlarged the pool of conscientious consumers willing to pay more for healthier, safer, more environmentally and socially conscious products and brands."



Shareholders care

The Harvard Business Review says that shareholders are getting serious about sustainability. A survey of 70 executives in 43 global institutional revealed that ESG is now a priority for these leaders, and that corporations will soon be held accountable by shareholders for their ESG performance.



Your employees care

A recent Mercer study found that top employers by employee satisfaction and attractiveness to talent have significantly higher ESG scores than their peers. This is significant because prior research shows that satisfied employees work harder, stay longer with their employers, and seek to produce better results for the organization.

According to [Forbes](#), "Brand storytelling is the cohesive narrative that weaves together the facts and emotions that your brand evokes. In addition to giving your customers reasons why they should buy a product or service, businesses need to start sharing the story behind their brand, why it exists, and why this matters, consistently across all communication."

Now more than ever, effectively integrating ESG into your brand design is no longer simply an option. In order to remain relevant, businesses need to be able to successfully incorporate ESG into their brand storytelling across all mediums.





Why ASEAN cares

A recent Oxford Business Group article entitled *ESG in ASEAN: a shared vision of sustainable recovery* states that “Environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria are increasingly shaping the global corporate agenda. ASEAN presents a range of ESG opportunities,” including:

- Environmental infrastructure developments. According to Kanit Sangsubhan, Secretary-General of the Eastern Economic Corridor Office of Thailand, Covid-19 has highlighted the relationship between the health of communities and that of the environment, as well as underlining the importance of green space in areas with high population density.
- Social impact commitments. ASEAN authorities acted swiftly to address the socio-economic implications of coronavirus, with all 10 members releasing at least one stimulus package by the end of April 2020. Many of these targeted priority areas that fell within the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.
- Governance reporting standards. The ASEAN region’s stock exchanges already require or recommend ESG disclosures. The very act of producing an ESG report – or even a report focused solely on one of the three components – inevitably enhances accountability and transparency.

Source: *Oxford Business Group*

Why you should care too

According to McKinsey, “Paying attention to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns does not compromise returns—rather, the opposite.” Here is their list of the five ways in which ESG creates value.

- Top-line growth. Attract B2B and B2C customers with more sustainable products. Achieve better access to resources through stronger community and government relations.
- Cost reductions. Lower energy consumption and reduced water intake.
- Reduced regulatory and legal intervention. Achieve greater strategic freedom through deregulation. Earn subsidies and government support.
- Increased employee productivity. Boost employee motivation. Attract talent through greater social credibility.
- Investment and Asset Optimization. Enhance investment returns by better allocating capital for the long term (for example, more sustainable plant and equipment). Avoid investments that may not pay off because of longer-term environmental issues.

Source: *McKinsey*

Here are some guiding principles for how your brand can make ESG an essential element of your brand design.



Stay true to your brand.

All businesses have some form of social impact. Social influence is an integral part of the brand, not separate from it. The storytelling method entails combining content and images to convey stories that are inspired by your brand’s ESG-centric corporate activities. While that covers the way the brand tells its story, when it comes to identity, we should also expand the brand identity system to add additional icons, illustrations, and images related to ESG. For example: use images of your business investing in sustainable agriculture, or participating in community activities that support gender equality.



Keep it simple.

Understand the scope and depth of communications activities for sustainability projects.

- Focus on relevant and important messages that everyone will understand. The easiest way. For example, infographics (add vivid visuals to reduce content). A picture says a thousand words.
- Define communication goals and prioritize information.
- Determine a suitable communication channel, such as your website or a social media post.



Make it relatable.

Lead with real stories and person-to-person perspectives. For example, how a brand exploits agricultural products grown with quality processes, ensures public health, or builds bridges to help children get to school safely. The key is empathy. When consumers empathize with the characters in the stories you’re telling, an emotional bond is created between the brand and its audience, further strengthening brand loyalty and perceived brand value. This is what makes storytelling so powerful.



Avoid clichés.

When people think about sustainable design, they instantly think about using green, raw materials, handcraft texture, or handwritten fonts. However, before doing that, you should evaluate whether those elements are consistent with your brand rather than just using them because they’re the norm.

Achieving ESG goals for your business is a long and challenging journey. This necessitates all individuals in an organization to join hands, regularly brainstorm new ideas, try new experiences, and have open conversations within the organization. Ultimately, these are great resources for your marketing and PR activities.



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ESGPath@RmooreA.com