

How to Benefit from Sustainable Business Practices (Without Greenwashing)

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For many companies, adopting sustainable business practices by going green can lead to competitive advantages, both financial and social. The temptation to jump on the corporate "go green" bandwagon can be great, but must be done with care. A recent article in *Forbes* outlines steps to take—and pitfalls to avoid—when creating and promoting socially-responsible corporate initiatives.



Corporations are facing increased pressure to be more environmentally friendly.

From the article:

"Company leaders are then faced with two options: respond sincerely with resources to the call to be greener, or attempt to reap the benefits of being green by merely giving the appearance of an environmentally-friendly company on the outside, without making the necessary investments on the inside (the practice known as greenwashing)."

It's nearly impossible to fake an environmental stance. Consumers will almost certainly discover attempts at greenwashing in time, and the cost to a company's reputation and bottom-line can be great.

Developing genuinely green credentials is the most effective way to build a long-lasting and profitable corporate image. The article outlines a step-by-step process for going green *the right way*. The first crucial decision point is to define what sustainability means for your company. There is no "one size fits all" approach.

Once selected, care still needs to be taken once you've decided to publically highlight your chosen green initiative.

Also from the article:

"Even firms who are legitimately trying to make their company greener can get into trouble when they try to publicize their green credentials prematurely, or when their efforts at being greener are largely symbolic. Only once you have established and genuine green initiatives in place, should you start drawing attention to your activities."





While you may be eager to issue a press release about plans to put in a new solar rooftop system, it may be risky to tout projected environmental benefits before the system is officially online and real data can be collected.

But remember, it all starts with finding the right sustainability strategy plan. Only then can you begin building a base for truthful and resonating messages about your sustainable business practices.

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